

LOUISA MATHEWS.

BY

AN EMINENT LADY.

“ The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,

“ Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears.”

POPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. III.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. LACKINGTON, No. 46 & 47,
Chiswell-street, Finsbury-square, Moorfields.

1793.

47457-59.18

Harvard College Library

Mar. 15, 1921

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LOUISA MATHEWS.

CHAP. I.

ON the following day the parties met at Wimbledon; Sir George Berkland's second fire brought Lord Bellhammond to the ground, who exclaimed, "I am a dead man." Sir George heard the surgeon pronounce the wound to be mortal, and with his second, Colonel Hainault, set off for the continent. The Earl was carried to a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood; and his second, the Duke of Portman, returned to town. The af-

fair was made public instantly ; but Sir George had escaped before a warrant was granted. Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Montague insisted upon the family's going to the theatre, and afterwards to the opera. " Men mean," said he, " to vindicate women's characters when they fight ; but it does *more* to destroy them than they are aware of. It is doubly incumbent upon us to appear in public ; had the wound been fatal at the instant, I should have thought otherwise. Louisa's mind rejected this doctrine ; but Mr. Montague's opinion determined her to acquiesce. They accordingly went, and much scandalous mischief was, no doubt, prevented from going forward on account of the duel. As soon as Sir George arrived at Calais, he wrote Mr. Montague the whole transaction, which indeed was no surprise

prise to him, as he expected this must be the consequence of what had preceded it. The reports of the third day were, that the ball had been extracted from Lord Bellhammond's hip, and that hopes were entertained of his recovery. Mr. Montague designed to have personal satisfaction of Lord Bellhammond himself, tho' he was a professed enemy to duelling; but learning that he had insulted Louisa with offers to live with him while under Mr. Montague's protection, he no longer hesitated what path to pursue. The dates of the two challenges determined Lord Bellhammond to take the earliest. Sir George had the start of Mr. Montague for two hours, and was therefore honoured with precedence.

The surgeons daily sent an account of the Earl of Bellhammond's amend-

ment to town. On the sixth day he was declared out of danger, and an express was accordingly dispatched to Calais on the following morning, informing Sir George Berkland of the favourable turn of his affairs. On the next day, a letter from William Montague to his father, dated Lisbon, bid Mr. Montague expect to see them in the beginning of the week. One article he suppressed was relative to their venerable father—"Poor Mathews had not any chance of recovery—the physicians pronounced it impossible; but he was anxious to see his daughter, and bent upon England, though at the hazard of his life."

C H A P. II.

AFTER a lapse of some days, Mr. Montague received a few lines from George, dated Dover, with an account that Mr. Mathews could never reach town. He requested his father to send down the housekeeper to manage every thing properly, and also to break the event to Miss Mathews as gently as possible, with an assurance that he had *himself* attended to his respected tutor with the affection of a child; that he had not been in a good state of health for some months: but they never imagined him to be seriously ill, till about a month previous to his embarkation for England:—that very day made visible ravages from the time he received

are-call from Mr. Montague. He added, that being Saturday, it was not a post day, which obliged him to postpone his letter four and twenty hours longer; and the intelligence then was decisive. Louisa had been extremely unwell for several days past with the fatigues of body and mind united, which she had undergone in so wonderful a manner, the Montagues thought her very unable to stand the present shock; and Lord Haleborough and his wife agreed to go to Dover, carry the young men with them to Lady Elenor Palmington's, and enable Mr. Montague to break the melancholy event to Louisa before their return. Lady Haleborough recommended antidating the time of his death for a while, as his being arrived, and not seeing his child, would add considerably to her sorrow.

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She was likewise kept ignorant of the housekeeper's journey, who was ordered to see every thing properly performed at Dover.

Mr. Montague and Lucy broke the event to her on the day that Sir George Berkland returned to England, freed from apprehension of being amenable to the laws. As this circumstance they were persuaded would afford her some pleasure, she was more able to receive the intelligence which would give her the most poignant concern. They told her that they had known it for some time, but that they thought her too ill to encounter the stroke. Every affectionate care and attention had been shewn him by his pupils, and the best Italian and French physicians pronounced the disorder a rapid decline. Lucy with all her levity had a good

heart; her spirits were considerably lowered by the disappointment she had experienced in her sister Charlotte, and she recollected that in fact that sister was the original cause of this new misfortune to Louisa, as grief at the account Mr. Montague was under the necessity of remitting to him had preyed on his mind with such keen hold, that nature had no longer power to struggle against it. With this persuasion she exerted double powers to calm her friend. Louisa consoled herself with the thorough belief that her loved father had been ignorant of all her misfortunes, and the kind and assiduous attention of her valuable friends made her endeavour to suppress her grief, confine it to her own bosom, and assume a cheerfulness of face to cover an aching heart—a task *less* difficult to perform

perform since she had hopes of so soon seeing George Montague, but she did not allow herself to believe that she had a warmer interest in that amiable young man than in any other human creature. Mr. Abercrombie had often told her, that George Montague's letters to him were upon a *beautiful subject*. "The eternal Louisa," said he, "makes me receive many epistles ending with this line—

"I am, my dearest Louisa, ever thine."

"And indeed, let him stand still, travel, or talk, he can only think of Louisa." Mr. Abercrombie always contrived to inform her of this propensity in George, which she would chide him for, and threaten to tell Lady Elenor Palmington of. She had little doubt now that this match would take place, as the heiress had refused Lord John

Portman the Duke's brother and presumptive heir, as his Grace had been married fifteen years without having any family. Advantages still less tempting than his disposition, accomplishments, and person, every body pretended to know that young Montague was the hidden cause of this rejection. Lucy had informed her, that her brothers were to join Lord and Lady Haleborough at Lady Elenor's—a sickness came over her heart, but her own natural good sense made her reproach herself keenly for feeling emotions she ought to eradicate. With new zeal she determined to forget George, and, if possible, feel that regard for Sir George Berkland he was so justly entitled to. No sister ever loved a brother more tenderly than she did this amiable friend, but she would have felt

felt uncommon happiness at seeing him united to an amiable woman. Until she experienced a different sentiment, she could not bring herself to believe it possible she should ever acquiesce with the wishes of her friends, for the Montague family were united in wishing this match to take place, and the Marquis of Pearcefield, who was warmly attached to Sir George, and engaged to Lucy Montague, frequently exerted his rhetoric to make Louisa sensible of his friend's merit.

During the visit of Lord Haleborough, his wife, and her brothers, Mr. Montague thought it would be advisable to join them, and settle the affair of his eldest son's marriage with Lady Elenor Palmington. He had not a doubt of her accepting the offer as she had always shewn a decided pre-

ference for him, unknown to herself. The Montague estate was divided from her's by a park pale, and the union of both into one would be the height of her ambition as well as his own. Of George he never entertained a doubt, for he had been accustomed to hear of this distinction from childhood. Abercrombie and Mrs. Goodricke were returned from disposing of Charlotte, and the latter took up her abode in Cavendish-square, while Mr. Montague went to accomplish the schemes he had so cordially cherished during the minority of his son. They had no desire of accompanying them, as the Marquis of Pearcefield's mother was to be in town for a week in her way to the South of France, and wished, though she was unable to see other company,

to

to have her intended daughter-in-law introduced to her. These motives were sufficient to detain her from joining the family party at Palming-ton.

C H A P. II.

THIS was not a time for Louisa to make much progress in her recovery. Abercrombie knew all along of George Montague's attachment, and received many desponding letters from him, upon learning the obligation Louisa Mathews was under to Sir George Berkland, and the probable degree of regard she *must* cherish for so attached a lover. He urged him by all the friendship they had hitherto known, to tell him the sentiments of Miss Mathews's heart—he was determined not to marry Lady Elenor, because his prepossession for Louisa was unconquerable. He said, he had *not* ventured
to:

to give his father the reasons of his being averse to the proposition, but they would ever exist. Perhaps, had he courage to unravel the mystery, Mr. Montague might yield to incessant entreaty. He had affected his friend so much by his letter, that he put it into his pocket for Louisa to read, who entered too deeply into the nature of his distress to disguise her feelings. She condemned Mr. Abercrombie for informing her of the passion George Montague had cherished for her, since gratitude to his father had placed an inseparable bar to their union. "The absolute impossibility of ever accomplishing this wish of his heart will effectually guard mine," said she, "against his design to engage my affections. Let him reflect on my situation—a dependant on his family—without fortune—"

" And

"And he abounds,—" replied Abercrombie.

"Injured in my reputation."—

"By *his* sister, who ought to repair it, *but* the brother? "What would your old friend, Mr. Montague say, if he now overheard you Mr. Abercrombie. Would he not think you deficient in friendship to himself, kind as you are to *me* in thinking me worthy of your bosom friends affections, yet I fear the father will condemn you."

"Believe me, Miss Mathews, I never should have broached the invariable purport of George Montague's eternal letters to *you*, unless I had frequently heard Mr. Montague declare, that, if William liked you, he should be happy to call you his daughter. I recollect Charlotte's answer to her father, which was, "I think my brother is not much obliged

obliged to you, Sir, he may marry the first woman in this kingdom—*with money.*” “True,” replied Mr. Montague, “and was I certain she was as amiable and as good as Louisa, I own I should give her the preference. But having lived sixty years without meeting a woman as perfect as she is, I fear there is little chance of success. He has frequently told me, that in *this* case he would settle you both very handsomely; for he loved you as sincerely as he did his *own* daughters. It is because he has told me his wish that the *youngest* son and you might like each other, that I venture to flatter you with being forgiven if you married the *eldest*; to be sure it will affect him at first, because he had settled in his own mind the union of two overgrown estates. But Montague

gue is too just to injure his son with a continued resentment."

" Pardon me," said Louisa, " but my mind has a strange presentiment that you have some very powerful reason for urging an argument just now, that I am convinced you would not have approved in any other person yesterday. Have I not heard you condemn clandestine marriages, and expatiate on the great sin of ingratitude, which was a combination of all vices in one? and yet I now hear you the advocate of a stolen match—a disobedient son, and an ungrateful being, who has received a thousand obligations from Mr. Montague. I am not blind, my dear Sir; some hidden cause impels you to change your opinion in this extraordinary way;—enable me to judge of the whole, by becoming acquainted

quainted with the parts. I am averse to disguise, and will fairly explain to you my sentiments. I am not a stranger to Mr. Montague's affection for me; he gave me some hasty information of his partiality before he went abroad. I endeavoured to forget it."

"*Endeavoured to forget it!*—Was it a struggle then?"

"It was a duty, Sir, I owed to Mr. Montague, and to his son. My humble and dependent situation made it a duty. But without this too powerful reason, the pre-engagement which I considered him to be under to Lady Elenor Palmington was a sufficient protection against the indulgence of any hopes, had I had the presumption to cherish them for a moment. Believe me, I have *none*. In rejecting Sir George Berkland, I did it from being

ing afraid that at some other period I might be sensible to the merits of some other person, as the extreme indifference I feel for him (notwithstanding the extraordinary obligations he has laid me under,) awakened my apprehensions for both. I trust, Sir, I shall acquit myself properly in every situation, since it is my incessant study so to do; but that obedience, which springs from *duty* more than *inclination*, is flat and insipid."

"Would this be the case, my excellent young friend, if Sir George Montague was the man? Louisa, your blushes have given me an answer in full.—Spare yourself, I will obey you, and tell you all the particulars you ask for. I have heard from the enamoured swain, who writes in the *Il Penserosa* style, *He is the most wretched of human*
crea-

creatures, Madam; the most unfortunate man that ever existed,—the most unhappy being on the face of the globe;—and many other desponding things that I was upon similar occasions some thirty years ago; but the why, and the wherefore, is yet to come. Mr. Montague and Lady Elenor have had a conference upon the subject; when the Lady allowed his son was extremely amiable, and the estates well situated for a union, to be sure, if they could ever bring themselves to like each other; but indeed that was a question she supposed George had never asked himself—and she protested the idea had never entered into her head.—Men were tyrants.—She had no thoughts of marriage.—Liberty was a blessing which could never be sufficiently prized. And she enjoined

enjoined Mr. Montague not to mention one syllable of what had passed between them to his son for a thousand worlds.

“ You may guess he saw through the veil, and obliged the Lady in the manner she meant he should, by telling George the flattering injunction, and prophesying that the present moment would be the most fortunate for the subject. He desired him to follow her, as she was turning into the elm walk, and urge his own suit. The kind of blank phiz George presented to his father’s eyes is better imagined than described ; for he had just finished a letter to me, declaring that the world could not tempt him to forego his attachment to a certain lady of the name of Louisa.

“ Sin-

"Sincerely am I grieved to be the unwilling cause of his disobedience to such a father."

"Pray, Madam, allow me to ask, Would you have married Sir George Berkland at your father's request?— You are silent, Louisa?—Then don't be unjust to George Montague. From that day to this, the father has absolutely made love to Lady Elenor for his son; and she very unfortunately, for George is perswaded that a dread of her reception withholds his tongue. The care visible on his countenance justifies her idea; but meaning to be kind, and give him consequence in his own eyes, she is absolutely cruel. The ridiculous situations George is thrown into from her humanity, would furnish out an excellent novel, perhaps, in fact,

fact, it will make a tragedy ; for George is determined to go to India, and has wrote to one of the Directors, his friend, upon the subject. " Louisa, look up ; what ails you ? " said Abercrombie ; but Miss Mathews was insensible to the question. An open window, and sup of water, revived her ; and the good effect this sudden information of George's intended departure produced, was a stop to the repeated declarations of indifference with which she had prefaced most of her arguments."

" Well," said Abercrombie, " after drawing up his boots for five minutes in silence, what think you can be done ? Tho' I acknowledge to you that I think you a gift for a monarch, I have *never* done so to George. I have exerted all my rhetoric in Lady Elenor's behalf,
but

but in vain; some fifty letters, at least, have I wrote, where this object was the particular one I had in view.—Your good father knew, for some time past, I find, of his pupil's attachment, and forbid him to name it under severe penalties. I can have only the family-interest at heart, when I recommend the most likely way of adjusting these difficult matters. George is absolutely determined, in spite of all advice, to quit Lady Elenor's charms—and, still worse, to go to India. In this case, his father will doubtless disinherit him; and I know old Montague's disposition, he will feel too much injured, ever to forgive him. But I tell you this headstrong fellow is fixed as a rock. Now I am persuaded that a clandestine marriage, which I have hitherto railed at I acknowledge, would excite a momen-

tary indignation at first—blow over—and both would be affectionately received.”

“ Mr. George Montague must have formed a very humiliating opinion of *me*,” said Louisa, “ if he imagines I will accede to so improper a proposal. I own myself mortified? Yes, Mr. Abercrombie, I am more humbled—more mortified than I can express.”

“ Upon the honour of a gentleman, Louisa, you injure my friend George, never did so wrong an idea enter his head, far from it—my friendship has struck out a path to save him. I protest he is a stranger to my thoughts on the subject. I have a difficult office, and I seek to acquit myself in it. Friendship leads me to create as much happiness, and as little misery as possible,

sible, among the members of a family I sincerely respect.

If George goes to India it is all over with him, if he remains here, and yet refuses Lady Elenor, his father in the first place will revenge the insult offered to the Lady—and in the second, will threaten him with altering his will. George is high-spirited, and will say a something to justify old Montague's resentment. But would Louisa furnish him with an excuse for declining marriage, by enabling him to say, "My dear father, I should obey you with the *utmost pleasure*, did the law allow it, but I have one wife already." I should be ready to step in to his aid—appease the old gentleman, put all your affairs in train, and be rewarded for my trouble by seeing all parties happy."

"That you never will see Mr. Aber-

crombie ; what makes some of us happy will make others miserable. It is utterly impossible we can all be happy."

" I cannot see with your eyes, did it rest with me to promote Mr. George Montague's happiness, I should destroy Lady Elenor's."

" Lady Elenor Palmington, believe me, Louisa, has too much spirit to regret a man who was insensible to her superabundant attractions. She values them very highly—and will scorn any man who does not estimate them in the same proportion. Have a better argument."

" I should behave with excess of ingratitude to Mr. Montague who has invariably treated me with tenderness and affection."

" What ?—by making him more than amends by conferring perpetual obligation on his favourite son."

" Oh,

"Oh, Mr. Abercrombie, you pervert every thing—should I not make a difference between father and son? At least a temporary one?"

"Yes, and by doing so, prevent an *eternal* separation. Believe me, Louisa, if George goes out to India—tho' he was to return within the year, Mr. Montague would not behold his face again, I am confident of it—the only way to prevent George from ruin abroad—."

——"Is to ruin him at home, for such would a union with me prove. Seven hundred pounds is every shilling I have in the world. Beggary would be his portion if his father continued his resentments; and that he would do so, I cannot entertain a single doubt. After what you have said, dear Sir, I think it will be improper for me to be here when Mr. Montague brings his

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son to town. If George is thus obstinate (notwithstanding he is without the smallest degree of hope that his assiduities are pleasing to me) I fear he may be more so, when he has an opportunity of urging his own cause. I am decided in my determination—did I even prefer Mr. George Montague (which I am sure I never gave him the smallest reason to suppose) I would not enter a family where I was to make a breach in their affections.”

“ William Montague sees many good consequences result from your connexion with his brother. No less than his preservation, for that alone will prevent him from going to India to avoid Lady Elenor Palmington—between ourselves, I believe William has all the inclination in the world to ease his brother of that burthen. I am convinced

vinced he likes her—but honour keeps him silent!”

“ In that case his advice has its origin in interest, and he is not blind to the probable resentment his father would shew to his brother George. Believe me, dear Mr. Abercrombie, your friend will regain his reason when you tell him, that my rejection of a very unexceptionable character (Sir George Berkeley) was owing *more* to the wish of continuing single, than to disapprobation of him.”

“ Convince him of this, and he will give over a pursuit so hurtful to his interests, and the domestic peace of his family.”

“ *Convince me of that* Louisa, and then I will urge it; but as you was acquainted with George Montague’s regard, previous to his going abroad, I will

fairly own, you will have a difficult task of it. I am thoroughly convinced Sir George Berkland *owes* his disappointment to your previous knowledge of his rival. Now, I dare say, you are *vastly* angry, but you force me to speak plain."

"Pray" Sir, when do you imagine they propose being in town?"

"This very night—the fall of the stocks brings them up instantly, tho' they had no intention of this, yesterday morning. I am certain, you have had enough of flying from Mr. Montague's protection in the eye of the world already—take my advice Louisa, sit still where you are, and leave the disposal of all to providence. You know that *hideous disagreeable* young man, George Montague, cannot compel you to mar-

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ry him. You *can*, I doubt not, give him a negative to his face, without any hesitation or trepidation. As you don't *care* for him, you know this is easily done, and all your sex have infinite pleasure in viewing the distress of a sorry devil upon such occasions."

"How you wrong us, to a good heart I am certain there cannot be a more distressing moment than that of refusing a man who has flattered us with so great a distinction; and I trust there are nineteen in twenty, upon the most moderate computation."

"Pardon me, fair Lady, do you not know that in ten bad, if *one* be good, there's still one good in ten. This computation varies from yours amazingly; but here are the Montague's I'm sure. The bustle in the hall convinced

Mr. Abercrombie the conjecture was right, and he quitted Louisa and the argument together to embrace his friends below stairs.

C H A P. III.

THE first impulse Louisa felt at this sudden arrival was to run down and receive the travellers with Abercrombie, but the second was, George Montague will place my joy to his own account, and therefore I had best stop for a minute. Then she thought Mr. Montague will think me unkind, deficient in respect and attention, and yet I ought not to let George see that I am hurried. She went to the door, returned, looked out at the window, saw the baggage taken out, and yet had not courage to determine whether she should go or stay. Lucy, who had returned home just five minutes before

the arrival of her father, was in the midst of her toiletting when she heard the agreeable voice of her brothers, and ran down to congratulate them. As she passed the drawing-room, she saw Louisa's gown, and called her to come directly, which summons she could not resist. Scarcely conscious of what she did, she joined her friend, and they both entered the parlour, where the men had already gone. Poor Louisa's trepidation did not escape Abercrombie, who did not place the source of it to the account the rest of the party did; they attributed the uneasiness she visibly shewed to arise from the idea of not seeing her loved father return with his pupils. Neither Abercrombie nor the Montagues were wrong. Her agitation owed much of its force to the sad recollection of
having

having seen the two Montagues and him together the very last time she beheld them, while these ideas were succeeded by the recollection also of those tender sentences George Montague had on the same memorable morning poured into her ear.

Upon such an awkward occasion as the meeting of two lovers, Abercrombie was the best manager in the world; he talked to every body in the room without waiting for their answers, which left none of the company leisure for observation. Poor George, notwithstanding his personal beauty and manliness, looked as much like a fool as any uncertain lover I ever beheld. Louisa was soon in an unembarrassed state, (the effect of knowing herself to be beloved by the most amiable object she had ever beheld) while George, attributing

attributing all her *gaite de cœur* to perfect indifference, sat silent, abashed, and reserved, ascribing his stupidity to the fatigues of the journey. It will not appear strange to people who have been in such situations to know, that except a bow and a curtsy at entering the room, they had neither *apparently* taken any notice of each other, one from diffidence, the other from confusion; but as every body else was engaged in joy and conversation, all this passed unobserved except by Abercrombie, who remarked with extreme satisfaction the pleasure old Montague took in seeing Louisa so wonderfully restored to her looks since his departure.

Dinner, and a little private conversation with Mr. Abercrombie, had restored George Montague to his former ease.

ease and cheerfulness. The subject they had discussed was of a most interesting nature, and Abercrombie's knowledge of the human heart was so deep, that he penetrated into the secret which Louisa plumed herself upon, for concealing so effectually from him. Her regard (however contradicted by her words) was most evident; and as she did not make a confidant of Mr. Abercrombie, he was at liberty to acquaint George with his observations, which he lost no time in doing, from having the previous information that the East India Director had promised him a passage to Calcutta in one of the Company's ships, which was likely to sail in ten days or a fortnight. He had only leisure to tell George, that he was his own inveterate enemy by attempting such a step, and desiring him

him to breakfast with him on the following morning, when they were obliged to rejoin the family ; for all this conversation had passed on the landing-place at the head of the stairs.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

IN the course of the evening, George found an opportunity to engage Louisa in private discourse, at the drawing-room window, and to repeat to her, that since the hour he first beheld her, her image had dwelt on his heart; that he was convinced neither her cruelty or scorn could drive it from thence, tho' she had given him the opportunity of trying their powers: that he had now determined (though he had not yet communicated it to his family to go to the East Indies to avoid a marriage with Lady Elenor Palmington, and to forget, or at least *try* to forget a woman for whom he alone wished to live.

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Though she heard every syllable which came from George's lips, she made no reply, indeed as she wished to keep him ignorant of her regard, she did wisely, for her voice had infallibly made the discovery had she attempted to speak. He engrossed her ear for some time, with intreaties to hear what he had to say upon the subject; it was yet in her power to detain him in England, could he but create in her bosom some small interest in his future happiness and welfare. "But alas! I see I cannot," said he, "as he joined his father to take an evening walk."

"How dare I exult," said Louisa to herself as she shut the door of her own apartment upon finding it empty. How dare I exult at having attached this man to me, since fortune puts it out of my power to unite my fate with his.

his. Singularly amiable as he is, beloved as he was by my father for his virtues, there is a laudable vanity in exulting at being the object of his preference. Hard is the task to forget him, but my duty bids me effect it, and it shall be done. After some deliberation she determined to inform Mr. Montague, that as Mrs. Goodricke advanced so much in years, she required somebody to be with her constantly, and that the interest of her little sum of money would enable her to be of advantage to this worthy woman, and to recover the health she had in a great measure lost by entering into the world. Lord Bellhammond was no longer an object to dread, for though the ball had been extracted from his hip, he had no hope of ever recovering the use of his leg, which shrunk up so rapidly

pidly from the injury some tendon had sustained, that it kept him in extreme pain; and though his life was not in danger from this circumstance, yet it rendered it a burthen to its possessor, as he was conscious of his sufferings even during his hours of sleep. She resolved therefore to go and reside at the cottage wholly, and to urge the necessity of the step so forcibly to Mr. Montague, that he should see it in its proper colours, allow her to depart, and continue his friendship for her. At first she thought she could communicate her intentions to Miss Lucy Montague with greater fortitude than to her father, but recollecting that she was to become Marchioness of Pearcefield in three months she supposed it natural for her to make a point of Louisa's continuing with the family till that

that period arrived, which she would willingly have assented to, if George Montague had not returned to England to be an inmate of the house.

C H A P. V.

THREE days had passed without Louisa's obtaining sufficient strength to open her mind to Mr. Montague, in which time George had seized every opportunity of urging the ardour of his attachment to her; the security that his father would forgive him, if he married without previously obtaining his consent, tho' he would not, if he did so in defiance of his commands; that Lord and Lady Haleborough, and Abercrombie would espouse their cause, and obtain their suit: but that unless she regarded him, no temptation in the world should detain him in England, where he was wretched in the extreme-
est

est degree, from the wish his father had formed of uniting him to Lady Eleanor Palmington. And as he foresaw the anger which would arise while there was no legal opposition to this plan, he was resolved to avoid it by a clandestine departure for India. She earnestly entreated him to spare his father the extreme affliction such a conduct would afford him. He best knew his own situation ; but as it would enable him to decide with more certainty about what steps he would take, she thought it proper to repeat to him, that favours conferred upon her father and her by the Montague family, compelled her to consult *their* peace in preference to her own ; that, fearing lest argument should move her, where she had herself to contend with, she had laid down a rule of conduct
which

which she would implicitly follow. She was resolved on returning to Mrs. Goodricke; time and calm dispassionate reasoning might induce Mr. Montague to forego his present desire of seeing him married to Lady Elenor Palmington. As his *friend* she advised him to try those methods before he took the desperate resolution of going to Calcutta.

“Would to heaven,” said he, “I could see the smallest shadow of hope that my father would forbear his present pursuits. Abercrombie, who is a penetrating man, is of my persuasion that there is *none*. He yesterday told him, that his son was quite averse to the connection with Lady Elenor; that he said, he should be extremely wretched if his father pressed it; too wretched to remain in England if Mr. Montague was irrevocably

cably determined upon the subject. My father's reply was, that he should indeed be surprised at such an act of disobedience from either of his sons whom he had so particularly indulged; that this marriage was a promise made to the late Earl of Palmington, Lady Elenor's father, who exacted it upon his death-bed, and that he should therefore feel it incumbent on himself to carry it into execution. My friend used every other argument which the subject suggested, but without touching my father in the least. My fate is fixed—I am driven hence by Louisa's scorn, and my father's severity."

"How ungenerous is that charge," Mr. George Montague," replied Louisa; "ascribe my conduct, I beseech you, to truer motives, for you know that you injure me in this supposition. I ought

not to tell you, that to perform my duty in this instance is a difficult task; but it nevertheless *is* so; yet I am firmly resolved to adhere to it. Allow me to condemn your rash determination of going out to India. Mr. Montague will urge you to marry—require it of you—but never really *compel* you to it. He is too just, I am persuaded, to carry his point by compulsion; be gentle in *your* rejection of his request, and he will be reasonable in urging it.”

“ Had you, Louisa, ever witnessed one of our conversations upon the subject, you would discard this persuasion. We *have* had the last discussion of this topic; I have wrote a letter to my father which I have now in my pocket. I shall give it him this night,—’tis my *dernier resort*. I no longer conceal the cause of my indifference to
his

his ward, without naming my adored Louisa, I have acknowledged a prepossession I cannot conquer; and describing the object of my inviolable attachment, have left him a clue to discover the inestimable woman my heart has selected."

"God forbid," answered Louisa with energy; "he will think me the most ungrateful of beings—the cause of his favourite son's disobedience to him."

"You affirmed that my father was just."

"But in this instance he may condemn me unheard; appearances are indeed against me; Mr. Montague will condemn me for staying in the house one hour after the declaration of your unfortunate attachment to me."

"It depends upon your will, Louisa,

to convert the misfortune into a blessing—Unite your fate with mine—My father loves you—he wishes to inspire my brother William with a regard for you, but he already likes Lady Elenor, I am convinced. Will you, in one respect, administer peace to my afflicted soul, by a noble, candid confession? Was there no obstacle from my father? would you, Louisa,—would you consign me to everlasting misery? Tell me, my angel Louisa,—I beseech you, tell me.”

“ For what purpose, Mr. Montague? Let us, I entreat you, avoid a conversation of this nature—it is dangerous; let us avoid it.”

“ Upon my knees, Louisa, I urge you to say, am I hateful to you?”

“ Why will you distress me thus? You *know* you are not. Is this wisdom?
will

will the certainty of my indifference, or regard, render you more or less miserable when eternally separated?"

"The certainty of your indifference would make the world a chaos to me—the certainty of your regard would gild every moment of my life, even in exile."

"Be happy, then, my friend: this, certainty, is all that Louisa has to give."

"Enchanting sentence! Does Louisa then, at length, feel a kindred regard? *This is joy.*—

"At length, say you? How little do you know of Louisa's heart! My duty bid me conceal my regard from you.—In an unguarded moment you have extorted the confession, but hope nothing from this declaration. My resolves you already know."

"And Louisa knows mine. New motives impel me to go abroad. Lady

Elenor's marriage with some man more sensible to her charms, can alone recall me. My Louisa, I live for you: though separated for an age, my passion will be permanent; time which weakens every thing else shall strengthen it. If it can know encrease, only remember me."

"Alas! our destinies are widely separated: to *forget*, not to *remember*, should be our daily tasks.—We are now wrong—it is almost criminal to talk on this too interesting subject.—I intreat you, do not deliver that letter to your father, till Mr. Abercrombie has seen it."

"Why so?"

"Because I see you are very imprudent. Promise—"

"—Whatever you command, I will implicitly

implicitly obey, provided it is not to forget you."

"Then I seriously take you at your word. Consult Abercrombie's opinion and advice, upon all occasions, relative to this affair."

"Would to heaven *you* would set me the example of obedience to *him*; he would mark out a path for both, attended with a thousand advantages. *You know, Louisa, he is an impartial man, a reasonable, dispassionate man*; and I trust you will allow what he says to have due weight with you."

"My father, Sir, tried to engrave on my heart, that sentence so necessary to be resorted to, 'Lead me not into temptation.' I therefore shall avoid any further discourse with Mr. Abercrombie upon this trying subject, and, let me add, with you. The line of duty

is before me, and whatever it costs me, it must and shall be pursued.— Could I,—was it possible I could feel the severity of my fate more exquisitely than I now do, I would adhere yet to it; and therefore it is only distressing yourself and me to seek conversations whose tendency is to make us still more unhappy. When I am gone from hence, Mr. Montague may think differently. Let us hope so.”

The appearance of Lady Haleborough, who had only just entered the house, for a moment disconcerted Louisa, though her visit had not this effect upon her brother George. This favourite sister had long been the confidant of his passion, which, however, she prudently concealed even from the amiable object of it, in the hope that her remonstrances with George, or Louisa's

isa's marriage with Sir George Berkeley, would put an end to a regard which had so many obstacles to surmount, before it could be rewarded for its sufferings.

C H A P. VI.

IT required little penetration in Lady Haleborough to discover what course the conversation had taken before her intrusion ; but had she had any doubts on the subject her brother would not have suffered her to remain in uncertainty, he conjured his loved sister to become an advocate for him, which Louisa interrupted with entreating him not to distress her, the impossibility of persuading *me* (was Lady Haleborough induced to attempt what I know is impossible) ought to be sufficient, Mr. Montague. You know my resolves.

“ What are they, my dear Louisa ? ” said Lady Haleborough, “ I have a full confidence in you, believe me.”

“ To

"To go instantly to Mrs. Goodricke," she replied, "as I had determined doing before the gentlemen arrived from Lady Elenor's; but in the very hour Mr. Abercrombie gave me the information of their intention to be in the course of the evening in town, they came hither. Since that hour my timidity alone has brought me into the present scrape of hearing a discourse from your brother, I ought not to hear. My humble dependant situation makes it madness in me to listen to Mr. George Montague, I have tried to avoid it—I will never, madam, be ungrateful."

"I am too well acquainted with both my brother and you to have any apprehensions about either. My father's affection to his son, and his kindness to you, Louisa—secure me from any doubts; but I am most earnest

when I say I should have been truly happy to have called you Sister, through William's means ; the affection such a tender connection creates I already feel for you, be assured."

The tears which this flattering confession brought into the eyes of Louisa, were accompanied with acknowledgments, and assurances that she would deserve her confidence, though she required not this new motive for persevering in her duty.

"Remember, sister—remember, my Louisa, *that* perseverance will prove my death warrant, but I submit. A few days will see me very far removed from your presence."

"Nonsense, George," replied Lady Haleborough, who wished to conceal the concern this threat gave her. "What wise plan have you in your head *now*?" He then told her of his
deter-

determination to go to India, which she treated as a chimera till he produced the Director's letter, promising him the passage in his particular friend's ship, and his interest when arrived at Calcutta. She was extremely shocked at so precipitate a step, and endeavoured by every argument in her power to dissuade him from so prejudicial an attempt. She recounted the many affectionate compliances his father had shewn to even his whims and fancies, during his minority, and represented in glowing colours (which Louisa endeavoured to heighten with all her rhetoric) the disappointment Mr. Montague would sustain in his son's opposition to his wishes in the first place; but that was little in comparison of the mortification he would receive at his going to India. He replied, "that he felt all the force of the argument; but he dared

ed

ed not allow himself to dwell on it. He was wretched, and therefore naturally pursued the path which was least so. "You know, Lady Haleborough, my father considers himself bound to perform an engagement (which he had no right to make with Lord Palmington) at the certain expence of his sons happiness. Abercrombie, my brother and you, have reason to know his determination; What is to be done? I will avoid daily altercation, daily disobedience by one stroke—banishment. Was he even kind to me in that particular of relinquishing his command, I should be best absent. I have summed up all my store of happiness in Louisa; but Louisa prefers my father's *approbation* to my peace."

"Louisa," she replied, "fees you *can* be ungenerous. Take it, Mr. Montague,

gue, as the proof of her affection, that she prefers your interest to her own. Let the sacrifice I make to my duty lead you, my friend, to a similar conduct. I am under obligation to your father, which I will repay, by urging his son to consider me as an object he can never obtain: for unless your family solicit me, I never will become your wife, and you know *that* is impossible."

"Then, farewell peace! - farewell hope," said George, in an undescrivable agony of mind. He requested Lady Haleborough to deliver the letter he had wrote to his father, and had then in his pocket, which Louisa opposed, by reminding him of his promise to shew it to Abercrombie, and to take his advice before he determined upon any thing. She marked to Lady
Haleborough

Haleborough her wish to withdraw ; and accordingly desired Louisa to carry her up to Lucy's chamber ; under this pretext they quitted the room : but both adjourned to Louisa's apartment, who intreated her friend to manage every thing with Mr. Montague about her going home to Mrs. Goodricke's, which she kindly undertook, wishing to spare Louisa every unnecessary exertion of a fortitude she had so many occasions to call into action. Louisa then proposed, that Lady Haleborough should take her on the following morning to the cottage, as she feared George's imprudence would lead him to take a seat in the chaise in spite of remonstrances, unless she had the goodness to go. " For I will own," said she, " I have as difficult a part to sustain as your brother ; and I confess this

this to you, dear Lady Haleborough, as *your* security, that I am without any disguise to you. Her extreme distress too strongly evinced the struggle which duty and love created in her bosom; but the kind and soothing assurances of Lady Haleborough; that if it only depended upon her she would promote their union instead of dividing them, gave her a satisfactory heart-felt pleasure, which was expressed by a plentiful shower of tears, and a smile of the extremest acknowledgment.

C H A P. VII.

LADY Haleborough made an excuse below stairs for Louisa's absence, by telling Mr. Montague the dear girl had a headach in consequence of their conversation about Mrs. Goodricke, whose ill state of health obliged her to have some friend resident with her for the future; and Louisa had very naturally acceded to this desire of the old Lady, and had begged her to signify her intention to Mr. Montague, as she found the quitting his family was too tender a point to trust herself upon. He really felt much regret at the necessity,

necessity, but he admired Louisa anew for her goodness of heart. "How few young women are there," said he, "who would voluntarily become the companion of a person in years, and surrounded with infirmities, in solitude, and very few removes from poverty; when the enjoyment of elegant splendour and admiration were in their power! That girl is a miracle," said he; "I have watched her in many unpleasant situations, and I protest I find her more and more amiable:—would to God, William and she could like each other!"

"Perhaps," said Lady Haleborough, "the parties are at cross-purposes:—suppose he should like Lady Elenor, and George not dislike Louisa; if this should be the case, how would you manage, Sir?"

"Have

"Have you any reason for so shocking a supposition?"

"So shocking a supposition!" No; mere conjecture; I declare I don't know whether William cares a half-penny for Lady Elenor."

"I'm glad you were only conjecturing, for the lad would be wretched if that was the case. You see the union of the two fortunes was Lord Palmington's wish."

"Yes; I understand you, Sir: the union of hearts has nothing to do with it, if I understand right?"

"I see George has been perverting your principles, Lady Haleborough. I am extremely hurt to find all my children oppose me."

"Nay, dear Sir," said his daughter, "you wrong me, I never had a thought
of

of opposing you. I am quite a disinterested person, and am accustomed to speak my mind to you:—George is very unhappy; he dreads offending you, but he has quite an aversion to Lady Elenor as a wife; and in that case, I fear——”

“ Did you undertake to distress me with this discourse, Lady Haleborough?”

She replied with tears, which this interrogatory brought forth, “ No, my dear father.—I declined taking any share in the contest to George; but I thought you would have suffered me to explain my feelings upon the subject. You never denied me the privilege of speaking my mind yet, Sir. You allowed me to reject one offer, and to take the person I approved, and therefore

therefore my poor brother's situation—"

"I entreat you, my dear Eliza," replied her father, with great impatience, "change the subject." She, however, applauded her own mind for making an attempt, unknown to her brother, to serve him. In the evening Louisa joined the family-party, which was increased by Abercrombie, Lord Haleborough, and some other people; this addition to their society made George imagine his attentions to Louisa would pass without observation; but his father, who was now convinced that some other attachment must be the cause of his son's opposition, though he had not received the letter George had written to acquaint him that this was actually the case,

case, now saw for the first time that Louisa was the object of his regard. Had they ever been much together, this idea would have struck Mr. Montague before ; but as the opposition to his plans were evident during the visit at Lady Elenor Palmington's ; and his son had only spent a few days before their going abroad, in Louisa's society, he never imagined a suggestion one way or t'other. He pursued both with his eyes, beheld his son absolutely lost when in conversation with her ; but witnessed the utmost discreet propriety in Miss Mathews. When he considered that the motion to return to Mrs. Goodricke's originated with her, he felt a regret at his heart, that she was not partial to William ; but concern at his son's folly, and indignation at his conduct, expelled these regrets from his

his bosom. He resolved to enable Louisa to return to the cottage on the following morning, after which he determined to seek a conversation with George, and re-urge his commands.

In the course of the evening Louisa found opportunity to ask Mr. Montague, whether Lady Haleborough had told him the necessity she felt for returning to Mrs. Goodricke's, which he rather coolly replied to, without expressing any concern, and said, he thought she acted very properly; she felt an unusual chagrin at his manner; it was different from his general conduct—the best bred man in the world, and yet he omitted one civil thing to make the parting palatable. This was a gulp to swallow—but she effected it without visibly betraying what she felt. The few hours which remained to be spent

spent below with the Montague family were the least pleasant she had ever passed in their society. She wished for the morning, as she should endeavour to prevail on Lady Haleborough to take her breakfast in Cavendish-square, and remove her at an early hour, for she saw the change in Mr. Montague's countenance and manner, and felt a secret injury at the unkindness of it, which hurt her the more, as she knew she deserved his affections more from her last actions than she had ever done before. Her mind was heartily sick of the world at this instant. "Am I not," thought she, "destroying my own peace, to promote Mr. Montague's? and the return I meet with, is stiffness, formality, and distance. Yet these mortifications shall not cancel what I owe him." In this

frame of mind she thought Lady Haleborough had acquiesced too readily with her proposition of going to the cottage, and imagined Lucy and every other member of the family was less cordial to her than ordinary; but the gloominess of her own mind represented their behaviour through a false medium. At such moments who is proof against the power of dejection, which tinctures every thing around us with bitters? When happy, we are persuaded this is an imperfection attached to our natures—when *wretched*, we forget that we owe our being *so* in a great degree to this imperfection, for imagination paints our evils in infinitely stronger colours than they actually are.

C H A P. VIII.

GEORGE Montague, according to the promise he had given Louisa, consulted Mr. Abercrombie on the subject of the letter he had in his pocket for his father's perusal; this good and disinterested friend, notwithstanding the former entreaties and arguments he had held with George, determined to blame him for his perseverance in opposition to his father's desire in the strongest manner possible, with the hope that his doing so would induce him to forego his intention of departing for India. He therefore repaired to Cavendish-square in the morning at an earlier hour than usual, when he was secure that Wil-

liam was engaged at the Horse-guards, as he was entering into the first regiment of foot, and that Mr. Montague, who loved late hours, would be still in his bed. When he arrived he was not a little surprized to see Louisa in her riding habit, and Lady Haleborough's post-chaise and four at the door, to the postillion of which Miss Mathews was giving an order about a trunk. Abercrombie took Louisa's hand, and an amiable pressure convinced her he was sorry she was leaving the family. Her eyes proved that she understood what passed in his mind. He now kissed her hand with affection, for his feeling soul made language in such situations superfluous, and joined Lady Haleborough at the breakfast table. Louisa remained without for a few minutes designedly, fearing she should be
some

some interruption to their conversation, as she was the subject. Mr. Abercrombie lost no time in explaining the motives of his early visit, which she applauded, and sincerely wished might be attended with some change in the temper of George, whom they both pitied extremely. Though they blamed him with their tongues, they acquitted him in their hearts. Lady Haleborough was charmed with Louisa's magnanimity upon this very trying occasion. She assumed an ease which was not the inmate of her bosom with the view to spare her friend from a painful participation of her griefs—her secret prayer was, that George's appearance might not destroy her bravado fortitude. She hastened every thing by her presence below stairs, and when the tears of the domestics obtruded them-

selves on her notice, she retired, to wipe away, *unseen*, the answering tear, which, in spite of her resolution, would not be controuled. Her friend and Lucy were persuaded, that one tender sentence would overturn all her heroism, and therefore avoided any allusion to regret, but as she was doubtful of their motives, her heart was almost too big at the indifference with which they bade her *write when she had leisure*. It was an honest kind of indignation. The look of disappointment she gave at receiving the sentence convinced Lady Haleborough they adopted a wrong method. She said, "Let us not suppress our regret—Louisa will be happier with knowing it is an affliction to us to be separated from her, than in seeing us counterfeit a fortitude we really don't feel." Lucy was not less tender,

tender, and Louisa thanked them for this seasonable relief, as her heart was near bursting with anguish. They both assured her, that the friendship they felt for her was as sincere as for each other—that they lamented Mr. Montague's adherence to a rash promise made to his friend without any previous reflection, and attended with so many distresses to people he loved, but sincerely wished, that time might enable her to reward Sir George Berkland who had every talent in the world to make her happy, and who loved her as ardently as their brother could possibly do.

C H A P. IX.

DURING this conversation, which the amiable trio held in the breakfast room, Mr. Abercrombie was engaged in another, not less interesting, at George Montague's bed-side, where he told him, that he was so headstrong, so bent on his own destruction, that he should now, for the last time, inform him, that Mr. Montague had received some intimation that he meant (if his father persevered in his desire) to go abroad. He asked me, said Abercrombie, whether this was true? My reply was, "Your son can give you better information of his plans than any other person. Never trust to hear-says, my dear

dear Sir, when you can know for a certainty by enquiring of George. I can only say, he answered, that if George goes abroad clandestinely, I shall consider his brother William as his only son and heir. Your brother came into the room, and Mr. Montague repeated this sentence. William said he should never enjoy a good which of right belonged to his brother, and added, that upon his soul he pitied George. His father seemed warm at this speech of William's, and replied, "I don't doubt it Sir, I don't doubt it." As I had fortunately heard this conversation *before* I brought out your confessional letter, you may be certain I suppressed it. I restore it to you, and for your sake advise you to adopt some other conduct not derogatory to your interests—discard your India scheme—endeavour

to pass your hours quietly at your fathers—never begin the conversation about Lady Elenor, but when he does parry it with good breeding and temper. Was you locked up in a garret there might be some excuse for trying to fly from your family and going to India, but at liberty in your person, it seems a perfect insanity. I could scarcely treat it as serious before, Lady Haleborough assures me you are earnest, so I come accordingly to prescribe a little wholesome advice. I am your friend, George, have no interest except the pleasure of promoting your welfare to bias me, so act as you please. George said *that* was out of his power; if he was at liberty to act as he pleased, he would withdraw from Lady Elenor with a formal renunciation of any right or pretension to her. That was all he should

should seek for, he should not then mention Miss Matthews, but wait till a more favourable opportunity offered to win over his father to his wishes. That though he loved Louisa with an undescrivable affection, he should not have solicited her hand till he had been enabled to make her a proper settlement, had not the urgency of the present case made it appear as the only probable way of eluding Lady Elenor, by a prior marriage, which he firmly believed his father would have forgiven in the month. "Let my father leave me at liberty about this cursed heiress and her dross, and I will not request another favour at his hands.—For God sake tell him what I say—use my own words. If he is still inflexible, India is my resource; there is no time to be lost; the ship is ordered to

the Downs on the 17th, and unless he changes, or Louisa consents to a private marriage (which would secure my negative whenever I was driven to give a final answer) I mean to go, so help me God." "You have said enough," replied Abercrombie, "I certainly shall not attempt to dissuade you after so solemn an asseveration.—I have nothing further to say."

He returned home with the intention of one more tight attack with old Montague, though he was heartily sick of the business, as each party was alike obstinate, but an idea struck him that Lady Elenor might perhaps aid George on such an occasion, if she was but acquainted with the secret situation of his heart. He was by no means intimate with her, but upon any opportunity, where he could essentially serve a friend,

a friend, he got over this ceremonious obstacle. He coned over his lesson before he went, for fear he should injure his friend by some unguarded expression, when he so assiduously wished to serve him. He had yet to learn whether the lady was haughty or humble, proud or condescending; whether she regarded George with affection or indifference; and almost feared his own powers of observation would prove deficient in discovering the various springs and movements, intricate windings and recesses, of a fashionable lady's heart. For in this rank of life beauty scarcely encreased the difficulty, as all the tonish belles are persuaded they possess this mysterious charm, though their glasses give many of them an hourly contradiction.

G H A P.

C H A P. X.

HE had left his name at Lady Elenor's door some half dozen of times on the preceding winter, and received as many invitations to her splendid assemblies ; but these sort of meetings do not give a man much opportunity of becoming acquainted with any trait in the character of the visited Lady, except whether she has taste in the decoration of her apartments, or spirit in the sum of money she ventures on the chance of a card. He was extremely embarrassed how to proceed, her particular friends, Lady Susan Forrester, and Lady Frances Newton, were both

both intimate with his nieces, the Miss Abercrombie's, and he imagined a little information from them of the Lady's disposition would enable him to proceed with better success. To the first, his near neighbour he accordingly went, and found this elegant piece of fashionable langour in a sort of yawnish lounge, upon a sofa in her dressing room. She said, she had just returned from Hyde Park where she had been compelled to ride by that horrid monster the Duke of Portman, in the very excess of heat and dust. "Conceive, dear Abercrombie—conceive *me* the most delicate woman in nature, undergoing the fatigue and nonsense of his insipid conversation—because my Lady Duchefs had made this abominable party. I'm quite sick of it—believe me."

"Why?"

“Why?” replied Abercrombie, “all the world seemed to be there.”

“Not a living creature—quite a mistake—not a soul.”

“That accounts for your ennui, my good Lady; but at what hour did you go? For I perceived quite a crowd as I rode through Knightsbridge, at one o’clock.”

“*One o’clock!* I was not up at that hour, Lady Berkland’s ball was not over till five—it was three when I got to the Park, and when I say there was nobody, I mean none of our set. Oh, for numbers, there was a little half million; but who, what, and whence they came, God knows.”

“Was Lady Elenor tempted to ‘set the world on fire!’

“If this little feat was in her power, I doubt not her inclination:—Heaven help

help the woman!—I believe she thinks herself another Helen.”

“What, by standing a ten years siege?”

“Oh! *that*, Mr. Abercombie, is quite a report. I have some reason for thinking Lord John Portman never made her the offer—exceeding good reasons.”

“I did not allude to Lord John, I meant Montague.”

“Montague!—I believe Montague likes her; he feeds her vanity, and, to be sure she is (*entre nous*), rather given to this foible. As long as Lady Elenor has but a tribe of admirers, she don't care of what colour, religion, or nation—Jews, Turks, and Gentiles, if they will but bow before her shrine, are alike welcome.”

“You are severe, Lady Susan—have some *little* mercy for God's sake; she's
your

your friend. Is Montague the favoured swain, think you?"

"Oh, I am not in Lady Elenor's confidence, I assure you: that he adores her, is as manifest as the sun at noon-day."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so! have I my eyes? He has every symptom in the world; a child may see his embarrassment when she is present—his absence—his silence, in short, half a thousand little oddities, which you, vain creatures (though such masters of arts) cannot hide from our penetrating eyes."

"Lady Susan Forrester must have so many opportunities of detecting these sycophants, that I dare not contest the point."

"Your most obedient. Mr. Abercrombie is always gallant; what a sad thing

thing this affair of the duel is in its consequences. Poor dear Bellhammond is, I fear, a cripple for life. I went with Miss Eglinton his niece to visit him, and I protest his appearance quite shocked me."

"Do you pity him?" Surely you forget that he deserved a thousand times more than he received."

"To be sure, as you say, he brought it upon himself, but yet there are many causes; the young woman was in a low way of life, and because she had some little share of beauty, and was old Montague's protégé, the world thought it mighty fine to defend her, while had she been plain, the Hector who challenged Lord Bellhammond would have left her in his quiet possession, I am thoroughly persuaded. Nevertheless, I certainly pity her, but had she
been

been plain there would have been no rout about her."

"I fear so. Beauty is that charm, which, by striking our eyes, engages us to seek a further acquaintance with its possessors. The illusion is so powerful, that our senses continue to deceive us in spite of ourselves, but this is seldom, for Nature is so perfect in her works, that she generally destines an amiable mind to a beautiful frame. Had Miss Mathews, however, been plain, I am convinced that though those horrible monsters called lovers would not have disturbed her, yet that she had had friends in proportion to her extraordinary merit."

"I hear a very good character of her. Except Lady Elenor Palmington, who detests her, I don't know a soul who speaks slightly of her."

"What

"What injury has she done Lady Elenor, in the name of wonder?—stole her lovers? been praised for a finer complexion, or shape? or admired for a more graceful minuet?"

"What a consequential string of injuries you have selected!"

"For female injuries, these are the greatest possible ones!—injuries that the most amiable of your sex find it difficult to put up with, and the generality of women resent through their lives."

"Well said, Mr. Abercrombie, I find the most amiable in your opinion are not the generality."

"Where would be the accumulated admiration, you, Madam, receive from mankind, if all women were like you! It is the scarcity enhances the value."

"I never relish a compliment paid
me

me at the expence of my sex ; but I forgive you in *its* name, for I am convinced you are now paying off the cruelty of some former charmer by this severe sarcasm. I am sure, Mr. Abercrombie, you are quits with the lady."

" That is some comfort ; for I fear I can never be *even* with your Ladyship ; *you* think Lady Elenor Palmington likes Montague, Lady Susan ?"

" I never said such a thing ; I don't believe she cares a halfpenny for him ; but the contiguity of their estates, which united, would be superior to her hated neighbour's, has lighted up a spark of ambition which would lead her to marry *deformity*, I verily believe, to accomplish it. The Cliffords and Palmingtons were always at daggers-drawing ; they are now rival beauties of equal consequence in the same county, but an additional

ditional weight of five thousand a year would turn the scale decidedly in Lady Elenor's favour."

"What intricate wheels put the female machine in motion! What will ambition affect in the human bosom!"

"Ask your own sex, they are more acquainted with ambition than women; if I personified Ambition, I should make it masculine; it is not feminine, Mr. Abercrombie, you cannot say that it is."

"I am sure of one thing—it is not *neuter*," he replied, as he made his bow.

C H A P. XI.

WITH such a lively trifler as Lady Susan, he could not implicitly rely upon her opinions, though he thought what she said on the subject of rivalry between the Clifford's and Palmingtons had some probability in it; but from Lady Frances Newton he hoped to glean more information; accordingly he hastened away to Portman-square, where he found her instructing her nieces the Miss Leighs in drawing, an accomplishment she particularly excelled in, and encouraged in them, as it was a perpetual source of amusement to a family of the domestic turn, which she anxiously wished the girls

girls to be, from the unhappy example their mother had given, that a vacant unfurnished mind is the certain road to ruin. Her Ladyship's brother-in-law, Sir Walter, was now seeking a divorce from the indiscreet Lady Mary, and had placed his four girls under the protection of their aunt, during the sale of his house and effects, after which the whole party proposed going for two years to Brussels.

"It is rather a singular sight," said Abercrombie, "to see a young and beautiful woman giving instruction to her nieces at home, at the expence of her admirers abroad."

"Divested of the *necessity* for this attention to the dear girls," she replied, "I cannot conceive a more pleasing occupation than in instructing the infant mind, and I often wonder that

mere selfishness, which is such a prevailing principle, does not tempt mothers in general to be the governesses of their own children."

"The modern mode of education makes them very ill calculated, Lady Frances, for this employment. If those women, to whom the charge of the rising generation is now so generally committed, have no warmer interest than emolument in making their pupils amiable, yet the pupils have escaped the contagion of dissipated example, by absence from home. 'Tis a shocking thing to say, but 'tis fact—describe the inside of all the houses of our acquaintance, you will find an universal licentiousness prevail through all its ranks, with very few exceptions."

"I am sorry to say that your remark is true," said Lady Frances, "it owes
its

its being so to the uncultivated minds of the women, who, if they marry men of sense, are not rational companions for them, which leads them into prejudicial society oftener than they otherwise would go; and if they are united to fools, they are led away by example, find no pleasure in any thing at home, pursue every insignificant trifle that has power to engross their minds, and drive away an intruding *ennui*, though they know they must end their career with embarrassed fortunes and ruined health."

Abercrombie perceived that Lady Frances had engrossed the attention of her young auditors to every word she had uttered, and had not the hour reminded him that he had a great deal to do in a little time, he would have indulged himself in a conversation much more suited to his turn of mind than

the frivolous ones he was obliged to enter into with the generality of fashionable young women, though he had some happy exceptions to this necessity in three or four noble families, and in the young people at home, whose minds this worthy uncle had cultivated with the affection of a parent, and ability of a preceptor.

He forgot not his principal errand, however, and therefore introduced what would lead to the subject. "Have you," said he, "read the long list of intended weddings in to-day's paper?"

"No, I have not. The papers are not particularly pleasant to Sir Walter Leigh or me at this time, and I have not looked into one for an age. Pray is Lucy and the Marquis on the list?—George Montague and Lady Eleanor Palmington?"

"The

"The first is, but of the latter pair not a syllable. Do you think that union is likely to take place? I know very little of Lady Elenor, but as I am so intimate with George, I really shall be obliged to you for some little insight into her character."

"Upon my word, it is a very difficult thing to describe a woman, who, like lady Elenor, varies every hour. She has very good parts if they had been properly attended to, but losing her mother at so early an age she has never been corrected; she has a thousand whims and caprices, which create her perpetual uneasinesses, but in the main has a good disposition as far as I see. I am not a real judge of her, though we are frequently together."

"Do you think that connexion will ever take place, Madam?"

F 3

"I have

" I have not a doubt, for Lady Eleanor has promised the first living which drops in young Montague's gift to Jack Stanhope his cousin. He himself told it in a room full of company. You know more of your friend than I do, but I think he has a very strong attachment elsewhere. That interesting charming girl who lives at his father's, has, I am convinced, a very powerful bias on his heart."

" Is this your observation, Lady Frances?"

" Not only mine, but Sir George Berkland's, who wisely and humanely gives up the pursuit. He is in a very indifferent state of health, poor man, and intends going to Nice, but William Montague designed going with him, till this unfortunate loss of his money."

" William

"William Montague's loss of money! When?"

"The night before last, he lost at Brookes's fifteen hundred pounds; when Mr. Arran entered the room, and advised him to go double or quits. He was averse to this till the party overpersuaded him, and he doubled his losses. It is the talk of the day, and my intelligence is from the winner."

"I am very sorry for it," said Abercrombie. "This vice is inherent in William. Mathews and I have made up many breaches for him with his father formerly, but as I had not heard of this inclination to game lately, I had hoped it had quite subsided."

"I am sorry to say Lord Haleborough's passion for this destructive pursuit promises much regret to the Montague family. His example has per-

verted William, to whom he lent money."

"I believe Lady Haleborough is still ignorant of it. Her father is extremely concerned at the unnecessary magnificence of that house; but as it is Lord Haleborough's ruling passion to make a splendid appearance, his wife has little power to controul it. She is far from extravagant herself, but the eternal round of dissipation, dinners, balls, concerts, operas, &c. are alone ruinous, without gaming, which nothing can stand."—The clock struck four, which induced him to make his bow, as he had to prepare for Mr. Montague's dinner to the Members of the Whist Club.

C H A P. XII.

THOUGH Mr. Abercrombie had fagged and fatigued himself all the morning, he had not made himself master of Lady Elenor Palmington's character in the manner he wished; but as he was sure he should see her in the evening at Mr. Montague's, he trusted he would gain some ground in the course of conversation. The concern he had received at this new folly of William's, and anger at Lord Haleborough's forfeiture of a solemn promise, made before marriage, had effectually damped his spirits. He foresaw the distresses this unfortunate propensity to gaming would involve the ami-

able Lady Haleborough in, and probably a young family, and though he tried to throw off these unpleasing reflections, which did the objects of it no service, yet the natural sensibility of his mind put this wholly out of his power.

Perhaps the generality of people who are professedly admirers of Nature, and contend that she will always have her way, would be astonished to see her universal expulsion from people of a certain degree of rank. Mr. Montague had in the morning been informed for the first time of William's imprudence, and the debt of honour he had contracted, which occasioned his father extreme concern; they had a very unpleasant conversation upon the subject, which ended with Mr. Montague's declaration,
that

that he would not assist him upon such infamous occasions. George and his father had long been on unpleasant terms, and Lady Haleborough for the first time had ventured to remonstrate with her husband on the cruelty of lending William Montague money for such a purpose. The family harmony had been considerably deranged in the course of the day, but well-bred people live in a state of perpetual disguise; the most acute observer would have believed that every member of the splendid board was in ample possession of contentment. Lady Haleborough excepted, who pretended a head-ache as an apology for her silence. A sharp sentence from a loved husband (the first he had ever uttered to her) had incapacitated her from enjoying the elegant society her father's table afforded.

When Lady Elenor Palmington joined the animated party in the evening, for champagne and burgundy had made every one of the men *naturally so now*, though they counterfeited before, *because they were well bred*. Abercrombie took his station at her elbow, and began a discourse which was amazingly interesting to *her*—the value of the Clifford estate, and the patronage the present owner possessed, which, though in fact very extensive, Lady Elenor reduced by *her* argument to a very insignificant income. He perceived she was not proof against prejudice, and therefore he rather increased that propensity, by defending the Cliffords, in order to bring her to some more decisive speech, in which he might discover some of her future plans and purposes. At length his
par-

pardonable arts were successful, for he said, "after all, the Cliffords are the first people in point of patronage in the county." "Poor creatures," replied Lady Elenor, "this superiority I believe will be very short-lived." Nothing further was wanting to convince Mr. Abercrombie that the leading principle in the speaker's heart was ambition. He despaired of doing George a secret service with her, and entirely abandoned the scheme.

C H A P. XIII.

LADY Haleborough, in the morning airing which conveyed Louisa to Mrs. Goodricke, had opened her heart very fully to this amiable girl, and confessed to her, that she daily perceived her husband was returning to the dissipated set he had foresworn on their marriage ; that dangerous as the experiment was, she thought it a duty required at her hands, to remonstrate with them, and that the irresolution and apprehension which had beset her, had made her extremely unwell. " Other events," said Louisa, " have hurried you also, but be assured,

red, Lady Haleborough, that I never will, till the request comes from you, be the wife of your amiable brother. I say this to make you perfectly secure of my determination." This re-assurance did away one of the loads which weighed down the heart of the Countess, who promised Louisa to give her information, from time to time, of George's affairs, and she hoped his return to his duty.

Some days had now elapsed without any material event having happened, except that Mr. Montague had, upon William's declaring his regrets, and promising *to sin no more*, paid the three thousand pounds he lost at play, or rather advanced it; for he assured his son, he should receive only the remainder of twelve thousand pounds at his death; but as the present pleasure was almost

almost unexpected, he truly enjoyed it without suffering this remote punishment to damp his spirits for the instant. George continued at the house, but an apparent gloom had taken entire possession of him. The day advanced when he was to quit not only his father's house and society, but his friendship and affection for ever; for Mr. Montague had again repeated his solemn intention to fulfil the wish of Lord Palmington. There appeared to be no resource, and he accordingly wished to spare his friends and his sisters the pain of unsuccessful remonstrances, and parting. So ordering his man to pack up his things, and sending him with them to Gravesend, he sat down to form a farewell letter to his father, Lady Haleborough, and his adored Louisa. To Abercrombie
he

he meant to write from the Downs, where the ship was now waiting, in which he proposed enclosing the others (Louisa's excepted.) To describe what he suffered at this employment of writing is utterly impossible. He gave a loose to the bitterness of anguish, and resigned himself to his fate.

When the family were assembled together, George, with an assumed cheerfulness, invited William Montague to go with him to Arran's at Epsom, which his brother was under the necessity of declining, as he had promised the Marquis of Pearcefield to go down to Oxford early in the following morning, an engagement George had previously known; but the desire of giving his friends the least possible pain at his abrupt departure, had induced him to form a pretence for absence a few days

days before they discovered he was gone for ever. Even Lady Haleborough was deceived by his manner, and the returning composure of spirits she thought she perceived in her loved brother's countenance. Mr. Montague had regained his former good humour at seeing harmony restored in his house, and believing that George would forbear any further opposition to his wishes, now he saw him so firmly determined, he avoided the subject of Lady Elenor Palmington till his horses were at the door, when, with a cordial squeeze of the hand, he informed his son, the lawyers were now employed in forming the settlements.

The heart of George Montague was filled with tenderness at the motion his father made to take his hand, but it gave place to indignation when he heard the

the last sentence. He made no reply, but mounted his horse, not for Epsom, but Gravesend, where he found his servant in waiting. They lost no time in joining the Indiaman, which had received immediate orders for sailing. He put a letter into the post for Abercrombie, inclosed in which were those he had written and placed in his pocket-book in Cavendish-square. To Louisa he addressed a second, conjuring her to remain single till it was in his power to return to England, which he would certainly do the instant he heard Lady Elenor Palmington was disposed of. He regretted, with the most poignant concern, that it was impossible for him to get to Mrs. Goodricke's before his final departure; and added, that he designedly kept out of the way on the morning she quitted the Square, as he found

found the trial would be too exquisite for him. He had wrote his last letter, and now endeavoured to mix with the company, who were to proceed on the same voyage, and to make himself at least not a disagreeable or melancholy companion. The ship was under weigh, the strangers, who had attended their friends till the last minute, were taking their leaves, when an express came from the India House to wait further orders, as the Company had received over-land expresses from the Government there, which they proposed answering by the Indiaman. The probable delay would be ten days at farthest.

C H A P. XIV.

THE exquisite delight this information gave George, repaid him in some degree for the painful efforts he had made to suppress his wretchedness at not having seen his Louisa before they departed. He lost no time in quitting the ship, and going to Mrs. Goodricke's, where the astonished Louisa was both pleased and distressed to behold him, though she did not confess to George that she had experienced the first emotion.

She now exerted all her powers of persuasion to induce him to return to town to restore peace to his family, who, she doubted not, were wretched, tho'

tho' she had not received a line from them in answer to two letters she had written, and represented the consequences of his father's resentments in the strongest colours; but George was unmoved in effect, whatever sensations he felt at the energetic entreaty of Louisa to *forget her for ever*.

As the evening advanced, she reminded him with new zeal of the necessity of his departure, and the impropriety of his visit, conjured him to return to town, and at least to see Abercrombie before his final farewell to England; but he had already bespoke a bed at a farm house, within ten minutes walk of Mrs. Goodricke's, and was inexorable to all her entreaties. her friend joined her in assuring him, "that there was cruelty in staying in the country, as Mr. Montague would assuredly

surely believe Louisa had given him improper encouragement, and even Lady Haleborough, will imagine she acts with duplicity;" but every argument was vain, till the hour grew so late, that had he proposed going, Louisa would have been eloquent in persuading him to retard his ride till the following day.

After he had bid adieu for the night to the woman he adored more than ever, for the propriety of her conduct, and rectitude of her notions, though they directly militated against all his fondest wishes, which led him to urge her anew to consent to a union. He wrote again to his friend Abercrombie, telling him of the delay, and his wish to know how his father had received the letter of information, but out of delicacy to Louisa he made his servant carry

carry this letter to town, and send it by a porter, as he did not design he should know from whence it was written. Louisa employed herself also in writing. She informed Lady Haleborough of his unexpected visit, her ineffectual entreaties to return, and her regret that he was determined to stay in the neighbourhood, in spite of remonstrance—"perhaps," she concluded, "you can still serve him with his father, or persuade him to leave me to my destiny. I will adhere to my sacred promise—have no doubts of Louisa." The post had been long gone out, which made the delay of a day. This letter was the first intimation Lady Haleborough had received of her brother's being at any other place than Epsom, for Abercrombie had learnt of the Indiaman's delay from the very
Director

Director who had accommodated George, and had actually gone to the Downs to expostulate with him anew. He had not therefore given one of the letters, in the hope that this proof of his zeal and friendship would have an effect on his friend, and the Montague family be spared the concern which they would certainly feel when they learnt that he had taken so decisive a step. Lady Haleborough requested her husband to carry Louisa's letter to Abercrombie, and to join him and William in going immediately to the ship, but Lord Haleborough knew Abercrombie was already out of town, though ignorant where. He proposed taking his wife and William Montague, without loss of time, to Mrs. Goodricke's, and representing to George the certainty of his being disin-

herited, as Mr. Montague had said some time ago, upon a suggestion of his taking French leave, and going abroad, that he should, *in that case consider William Montague as his only son and heir*. This was agreed to, and the carriage ordered without loss of time. When they got to Mrs. Goodricke's, the house was shut up—not a soul there—they knocked, rang, &c. but not a creature answered. William ventured to lay a wager that his brother had taken Louisa to Gretna Green, but Lady Haleborough was too well acquainted with the disposition of Miss Mathews to give a momentary credit to what appeared to her husband to be far from improbable; a little boy came running from a distant cottage, saying Mrs. Goodricke was at the farm at the end of the lane; they went, and found
in

in the entrance of the house Louisa in strong convulsions, held by a man and two women, who told the astonished enquirers that they were occasioned by a gentleman who was dying up stairs. A scream from poor Lady Haleborough, and "Good God" from William, told George they were near him. He sent Mrs. Goodricke down to shew them the way. The two gentlemen prevailed upon the Countess to remain below with Louisa, who was in a terrible way, till they returned, and obeyed George's summons. He gave them the following account—that at the express command of Louisa, he was mounting his horse to go to Lord Haleborough's on the preceding evening at six o'clock—that he had taken his leave of Louisa, and being giddy in his head at the instant, he designed to lead his horse

till it was better—at the bottom of the lane, however, he mounted, and seeing Louisa stand upon the bench in Mrs. Goodricke's garden, he waved his white handkerchief as an adieu, which frightened the servant's horse, who reared up against his, and instantly plunging across the ditch, flung him, broke his arm and collar bone, and injured some blood vessel, which the surgeon, at his express entreaty, had acknowledged to be irreparable—that the bones were no reset, as it would give him new pain and no art could save him. This news, too hastily communicated this morning to Louisa, is the cause of her malady," said Mrs. Goodricke, "we heard of the accident in five minutes. My poor girl behaved like a heroine till the surgeon unthinkingly told her there was danger." The surgeons were in the neighbourhood

neighbourhood, and William was gone for them, while Lord Haleborough wrote a line to Abercrombie, with orders to relate George's situation to his father, and to come down without loss of time. Louisa grew better, and recollecting an internal medicine for stopping blood, whose effects are almost instantaneous, she entreated some person might be dispatched express for it. The servant was gone, but the postillion took her orders, and mounting one of the chaise horses, lost no time in bringing it down. George lay calm and composed, perfectly resigned to his fate, when his brother returned with the surgeons, who found the arm still too much enlarged to attempt to set the bone, which was the real reason they had not done so before; they had applied proper things to reduce it, but

they had not the most distant hope that the internal injury could be stopped—they again pronounced it as an impossible thing.

Lord Haleborough, nevertheless, endeavoured to give his wife hopes, which he did not himself feel, and seeing Louisa capable of receiving comfort also, he offered to return with them up stairs, if they thought they could preserve George from agitation at the interest they took in his misfortune. They both promised their utmost exertions, and performed to a miracle, till the loss of blood produced faintings in George, which became very frequent. When Louisa found she could not controul her agony of soul, she darted out of the room like lightning, and rushed to the bench in the garden, to give vent to her uncontrollable sorrow,

row. At this instant she saw her messenger return with the powders. All her fortitude came again to her aid—she read the prescription—took the proper quantity—mixed it, and re-entered the room, with the most animated hope on her heart. She gave Lord Haleborough the paper to read, while she administered the cup to the lips of her lover, who was only able to acknowledge his thanks, by pressing her hand to those lips. She again retired, and with an earnestness of soul the afflicted must feel, commended her prayers to heaven. In half an hour's time the amendment was visible. A new dose, and some panado gave him strength to say, “he was sure Louisa had saved him.”

The surgeons were astonished at the

change, and lamented that they never had known the value of the stiptic. The bleeding was wholly stopped in the course of six hours.

C H A P. XV.

LORD Haleborough was surprised at the length of time his servant staid on his message to Abercrombie, but supposed he had not returned to town, and regretted his stupidity at enclosing Mr. Montague's letter under his cover. Mr. Abercrombie, however, *had* returned to town from the Downs, and imagining it best to tell old Montague at once, and let him act for himself. He had gone to Cavendish-square to acquaint him with what he had done. George's absence from the ship, and his ignorance of where he was gone to, as well as his conjecture, that the cottage was the most probable place, as he

might wish to take a parting farewell of the woman he loved.

Mr. Montague was extremely exasperated at this intelligence, and declared he would never behold his face again ; that he should certainly take the consequences of such a disobedient conduct, by losing any possessions of his ; that William Montague from that hour was his only son and heir, and that no consideration on earth should tempt him to alter his resolution. At length, however, he asked Abercrombie to go with him directly to Epsom, as he was certain *that* was the place to find him in, where he would even then forgive him the past, provided he would instantly return to his duty, sign the marriage articles, and lead Lady Elenor Palmington to the altar. In consequence of this journey to Epsom the
servant

servant remained in town till their return.

Mrs. Goodricke's cottage accommodated Lady Haleborough at night, but as Mrs. Goodricke and William Montague continued at the farm, Louisa saw no impropriety in staying there also; the bones were all set on this evening, and the surgeons entertained hope that they should preserve him from a fever which they had some reason to apprehend would increase. A new distress now arose by the sudden indisposition of the Countess, who was prematurely brought to bed of a still-born son, from the affliction she had known on her brother's account; every possible accommodation was procured, and a dispatch sent to Lucy Montague to come down, and bring some of her sisters attendants. Louisa's attention was divided between the two houses,

poor Mrs. Goodricke was so infirm that she only served as a sanction for Louisa to attend her lover, who had persuaded his brothers to try their influence over Lady Haleborough, who could prevail with Miss Mathews to assent to a union *now*; they kept the Countess's confinement from her brother, for fear he should reproach himself severely with being the cause of her misfortune. The tender affection which Louisa had shewn to this Lady, at a moment when the health of her lover ingrossed all her heart, and the promise of George to remain in England if Miss Mathews could consent to be his, overcame Lady Haleborough's former resolutions. She joined with her husband and brothers in entreating Louisa to yield to their wishes; and reminded her, that she formerly said, "*She would never become his wife, unless Lady Hale-*
borough

borough asked it." She *now* did so, and should consider her as the only means of restoring George to happiness, and his friends.

Abercrombie had returned to his own house, and found Lord Haleborough's letter, which brought him instantly down to the cottage. He made no opposition to the match, as Mr. Montague had solemnly renounced his son, and therefore he was at liberty to do as he pleased. Though the father came constantly to see Lady Haleborough, he never once came near the dwelling of George, which threw him so far back, that all their fears for his life were again afloat. On the change for the better he begged his brother-in-law's chaplain might procure a special licence, and make his appearance as soon as possible, for the idea of Louisa's being irrevocably *his*, would
do

do more towards his recovery than all the medicine and surgeons in England. Three days intervened between the request and accomplishment of it. Lord Haleborough wished to avoid giving offence to Mr. Montague, as well as William did; and accordingly Mr. Abercromhie gave her away to her lover, who was supported with pillows upright in his bed, while the chaplain performed the ceremony, George being previously made acquainted with the cause of his sister's absence.

Three weeks passed after this union before Lady Haleborough was able to return to town; my Lord had been frequently there during her confinement, and had again very deeply involved himself in play. A fresh mortgage on the family estate, and the sale of his stud was transacted with great privacy, .

privacy, to free him from the debts of honour he had incurred. The dread of Mr. Montague's hearing it was great, as though he had given ten thousand pounds down at the marriage of his daughter, he had promised as much more at his death, provided my Lord adhered to his promise of forsaking the gaming table.

C H A P. XVI.

MR. Montague was inflexible when he heard from Lady Haleborough the explanation of every thing; Louisa's blameless conduct, and every possible extenuation of her brother's conduct was urged, but without any effect. William Montague was now at full liberty to confess his particular regard for Lady Elenor Palmington, who had long seen his partiality; and had her ambition been lulled, would have given him the preference to his brother, from the time of their return from abroad. She now saw the accomplishment of her dearest views, and without hesitation acknowledged a regard.

gard she had long felt, but tried to suppress, as William had kept her in doubt of his sentiments; for she assured him the *proper* disposal his father had now made of his fortune, did not influence or bias her heart in the smallest degree. William informed his father with infinite pleasure of the reception his suit had met with, and preparations were accordingly made for this splendid union with all possible haste. Mr. Montague promised his son two thousand a year and ten thousand pound, and all his possessions at his death, real and personal, when his daughters fortunes were paid. Lucy and the Marquis waited only for the lawyers, and knowing Lady Elenor's acquiescence with her brother's wishes, Miss Montague proposed to her lover to postpone the ceremony to the same day; but

but the necessity of joining his regiment in Ireland made this compliance with her wish impossible; sincerely attached to her family, she felt all the distresses of parting with them, though she went with an object most dear to her heart.

The Marquis, who with a thousand follies, had essential good qualities, and no real bad ones, thought the present moment a favorable opportunity for urging something in favor of George and of his most lovely, most amiable wife, but without effect. They were almost deprived of the necessaries of life by the continuance of Mr. Montague's anger. George had only the pay of lieutenant, and the trifle he had saved of his father's liberal allowance for his pocket expences, the long illness had swallowed up all he possessed:
his

his saddle horses were sold, his servants dismissed, and part of Louisa's seven hundred pounds sold out of the funds to furnish two rooms in Mrs. Goodriche's cottage.

Whatever mortification he felt at the situation his father suffered him to remain in, and the ease with which William stepped into his honors he suppressed them; but he saw, notwithstanding the virtuous deception, that Louisa was ever reproaching herself with being the cause of privations to her loved husband. The many tender regrets she expressed whenever occasion required it, were answered by the truest declaration of his heart, that he preferred poverty with *her* to all the riches his father possessed without Louisa to share them. Every day increased his esteem for a woman, who with every
elegant

elegant acquirement in the world, exerted herself in the useful domestic duties of the house with an alacrity and pleasure he had never witnessed her to put forth at his father's, where every elegance courted her acceptance.

But to return to the Marquis of Pearcefield—He was married at St. George's Church to Miss Lucy Montague, and they set forward immediately after the ceremony for Ireland, from whence she wrote her concern, that she could not accomplish a second interview with her brother and sister at the cottage, previous to her departure, and enclosed a hundred pound bank bill, with a request that Louisa would accept it.

C H A P.

C H A P. XVII.

GEORGE had recovered all his complaints, and easily reconciled himself to perform his part of the family-labour, by attending to the garden in a very skilful manner, which not only afforded them vegetables for their table, but health, employment, and satisfaction to him. Mrs. Goodricke he treated as the mother of Louisa, and with one servant maid for all their wants, they spent near a twelvemonth together in enviable peace, when poor Mrs. Goodricke paid the debt of nature, and a nephew whom Louisa had never heard her mention came to take possession of her effects.

William

William Mountague had been married some time, and tho' only distant from London, fifteen miles, he had contrived to frame civil excuses to his brother George, for not getting leisure to see him. The fact was, Lady Elenor Montague bore Louisa the most inveterate hatred. The preference George had given Miss Mathews was a crime of so heinous a nature, that she was for ever distressing her husband, by mean insinuations of him, and abuse of his wife. At first William contested the point but frequent repetitions, sulks, offences, and sneers, rendered these conversations so distressing that he avoided them; and at length the bare enquiry after Mr. and Mrs. George Montague from a visitor created unpleasant sensations to William. He nevertheless regarded his brother, and unknown to his wife,

wife, sent him many acceptable presents, such as wine, game, and some pieces of muslin for Louisa. At first George's spirit rejected the gift as coming from an usurper; but the gentleness of his wife's disposition calmed him to peace. She dwelt upon Williams's noble conduct to his father, in saying he never could enjoy, what in justice was his brother's, and vindicated him from all faults, "if his father is determined to make him his heir, is William to blame? With this imperious wife he is prevented from being more kind; but this is the earnest of what your brother would do, was the power equal to the inclination;" the only difference of opinion they ever maintained was upon this subject.

When Mrs. Goodricke's nephew came down, he not only took possession

sion of his aunt's effects, but of the furniture which George and his wife had purchased upon their marriage ; and upon George's absolute refusal to deliver them up, they were presented with a bill for board and lodging, during the time they had lived in the cottage. Young Montague protested that no consideration in the world should tempt him to comply with so infamous a demand. His perseverance in this determination produced an arrest, which Louisa immediately informed Abercrombie of: he came down, bailed his friend, and advised him by all means to punish the infamous attorney employed in the affair. In poor Louisa's distress of mind, she wrote to Lady Haleborough, whose father had forbid her to go to the cottage, and requested her to dissuade George from contesting the point,

point, as should he lose his cause, they must be absolutely undone. Mr. Abercrombie was going abroad directly, and should any thing happen in his absence they had no resource.

Lady Haleborough replied to this letter, with lamenting, that she had it not in her power to contribute to the ease and comfort of her loved brother and sister in a greater degree: "there are a thousand things I could say to my dearest Louisa," said she, "that I dare not commit to paper; never mention hearing from me, or if you should see me, which is not impossible, keep your friends ignorant of it: I will give you my reasons for it when we meet." A ten pound note, with a regret that she had little in her power, accompanied this affectionate letter. Louisa and her husband were shocked at the me-

lancholy which pervaded these few lines, and waited in their new abode (the farm) where he was originally confined in his illness, till such time as this promised visit took effect.

George made very frequent excursions to town to promote his interest in the army, but a *disinherited* son found the tide of rapid promotion he expected while in his father's favour, had wholly retired. He called always at his brother's splendid mansion, in Portman-square; and when he did see him, upbraided him with unkindness and want of brotherly affection, without ever glancing at Lady Elenor's conduct. William found the justness of the reproach, and ashamed at his heart for being governed by a woman in so imperious a manner, he determined to throw off the shackles of restraint he had

had hitherto known, and assert a proper spirit in defending his family. He, however, only thought this, for he never said any thing like an apology to his brother, but so earnestly pressed, and at length entreated him to stay dinner, that at last he complied.

C H A P. XVIII.

WHEN Lady Elenor made her appearance, she put on a smile, asked how long he had been in town? Whether his wife was brought to bed, which crimsoned her husband's face with vexation, and George's with indignation; that sisters lived upon such terms as to imagine such an event could happen, without all the family knowing it; at this time Lady Elenor determined, if she could to create words between the brothers, fulsomely civil to George herself, she sought the opportunity of bringing it about. After dinner she ordered a servant to go to Cavendish-square, with her love to Mr. Montague,

Montague, and she was sorry she could not wait on him that evening. After the servant had got halfway down the stairs, she rang, "John," said her Ladyship, "Don't mention that Mr. George Montague is here, I desire. "I hope," said she, "*that* will prevent its reaching his ears, for you know, my dear William, he *might* take it unkind, if he knew your brother gave us the pleasure of his company." William really suffered, and George out of compassion to him smothered the speech which stood on his lips. After another half hour's conversation, which was spent below stairs for fear of leaving the brothers alone, her husband begged her to make tea, and send them word when it was ready.

When his wife had departed, William took his pen, and wrote a draft

upon his banker of a couple of hundred pounds, payable to George ; and afterwards gave him a twenty pound note out of his letter-case, to give to Louisa for a christening-cap for her child. He made, in these silent acknowledgments more than amends for the coldness George had accused him of ; and at parting, he told his brother that he would undoubtedly take his dinner with him on the child's name-day. " I don't know how it is, George—business—a thousand things.—I cannot get a day for the country."—But the awkwardness of these apologies explained the cause of difficulty to be Lady Eleanor Montague.

Two days after George's return to his own abode, Lady Berkland and Lady Haleborough surprized Mr. and Mrs. Montague by alighting at their door.

door. The first Lady was by no means a desirable guest, but as Sir George Berkland had not had his *rank and fashion* disgraced by marrying *Mathews's girl*, Lady Berkland (Louisa's god-mother) was inclined to be civil to her again ; and enquiring of Lady Haleborough for a direction to the cottage, the Countess told her, that she should like to attend her, though it must be secret, as her father would take it extremely ill. George contrived to engage the old Lady to give the young one's an opportunity of an hour's conversation, in which Lady Haleborough told her, that not only William, but Mr. Montague and Lord Haleborough were under the influence of Lady Eleanor Montague. She had so thorough a power over the latter, that a thousand expences were incurred, which, though

she lamented, she could not remedy. William was going headlong to ruin, he spent most of his time in a gaming-house, and was now taking up money upon *post obit* bills. Lady Elenor's envy will not suffer me to remain in splendor, when *she* must contract *her* expenses. Acquainted with my husband's weakness and passion for play, she urges him to adhere to William at these tables as a check upon *him*. My father is charmed with the prudent precaution, and the dread of offending him, and injuring Lord Haleborough by a discovery of his own losses, withholds me from complaint. Guess, my dear Louisa, at the shock I sustained in finding two executions in my Lord's house, on my return from the Birth night ball. To *me* these things were so new, that they almost killed me; to my husband they appeared

appeared nothing; he settled the affair by applying to a money-broker, but the consequence we must feel through life.

Louisa felt her Ladyship's unfortunate situation, almost as keenly as she did, but was happy to find—that notwithstanding she knew of his extravagance, she still continued ignorant of his connexion with an opera singer, who was of the most profuse unprincipled turn in every sense of the word. Lady Haleborough assured her sister, that she came to seek her counsel and advice, how to proceed in reclaiming her husband before it was too late, and to apologize for the closeness of her purse to her dear George. My Lord denies me nothing, he is excessively tender of me apparently, but essentially negligent of his family. Louisa ad-

vised her to propose a country excursion, and by making home as lively, chearful, and interesting as possible, win him (without appearing to have any design) to give *it* the preference to any other pursuit. "Believe me," said Lady Haleborough, "I have ceased to expostulate." I now repent I ever flew to that resource, but I conceived it to be my duty to save him if possible. The dejection visible in Lady Haleborough's countenance however, had its rise from the officious information of a friend, that Lord Haleborough kept a mistress; but though she instantly repulsed the gentlemen who gave this unwelcome intelligence, with telling him, "she believed it to be false, and desired never to see his face again." She gave it the most ample credit, yet, not even to Louisa would she breathe a hint of her suspicion.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIX.

WHEN Louisa had encreased the domestic happiness by the birth of a son, Lucy and Lady Haleborough thought they ought again to endeavour raising some affection in the bosom of its grandfather, and applied themselves most assiduouſly to the conſideration of the ſubject. The Marchionefs, ſtill in Ireland, wrote to Mr. Montague; and Lady Haleborough, who was in Suffex, did the ſame, but he continued in the ſame inexorable frame of mind: The Marchionefs of Pearcefield had informed her ſiſter, that though ſhe was perfectly happy, yet that her husband kept her almoſt bare of money; “ In re-

gard to myself," said she, "it makes no difference—for I run in debt, and he pays it, but I have no power or hope of sending dear George more than a paltry ten pound. God knows I would do much more if I had it in my power; as a proof of which I send a box of Irish linens for Louisa and you to divide between you. I wish I could make her some amends for the loss of the cause to Mrs. Goodricke's nephew."

Lady Elenor Montague added a son to the Montague family just in sufficient time for Mr. Montague, his grandfather, to see the child before his death, which happened on the very day fortnight after the infant's birth. Louisa postponed the christening of her little George till his uncle William could fulfil his voluntary promise of coming in person; but the necessity of remain-
ing

ing in town furnished him with an excuse Lady Elenor had teized and worried him to make, till at last he wrote an apology in his own defence.

George had determined to wait, (notwithstanding he was much distressed for money) till his brother had shewn what part he proposed acting by him, now the family estate was in his power—he had heard of post obit bills being granted, but he was ignorant that the best half of his father's estate had already been granted in this way. The unkindness his father had shewn him lessened the concern he would have felt for his loss, but his immediate wants, and the interesting situation of his loved wife and sweet child, drove him to write to his brother William within the month, who had as yet never addressed a line to him. As a week passed with-

out

out his receiving any answer, he went up to town,—saw not only his father's late residence in Cavendish Square, but also his brother's in Portman Square, put up to sale; and upon enquiry, learnt that Mr. Montague, Lady Eleanor, and the child were all gone to Brussels for three years. The indignation he felt at his brother's conduct, was such, as every person must feel in his situation. Abercrombie was still at Nice, and the numerous herd of acquaintance he had formerly known, had so effectually deserted him upon his marriage and *disinheritance*, that he determined to struggle with his misfortunes, without explaining them to the world.

C H A P. XX.

HE bent his steps towards Lord Haleborough's,—here he found the most splendid preparations for a dinner; he was instantly taken to my Lord's study, where there was other company whom he knew; and he endeavoured to regain his composure by entering into conversation, but losses at Brookes's,—Horses, and the Opera, were now subjects of so little interest with George, that he could not obtain his purpose. Lady Haleborough sent down her love, and she wished to see him in her dressing-room, when his brother-in-law said, "I have company, George, but I suppose you will not be tempted."

tempted to quit your nursery for it?"

This was no invitation,—distress makes the mind sore,—he thought it was a studied speech to get rid of him.—

When introduced to his sister, he found her looking more like a shadow, than a substance: "late hours," she said, "did not agree with her, but my lord was so fond of them, that she could not avoid entering into them also; but her brother was well convinced, late hours *alone*, however prejudicial to health and complexion, could never effect the change he now witnessed."

After a thousand tender enquiries about Louisa and the infant, they recurred to William Montague, whose extraordinary conduct had distressed her amazingly. "You will be astonished," said she, "at his folly. Six months ago, it seems, Sir William Archer and
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he were talking about the probable increase of estates.—Mr. Archer's, his uncle's, was equal to my father's, they were both in want of cash, though they had deeply taken up money on post obits, when Sir William proposed to bet old Archer's life against Mr. Montague's, and the winner take both the estates, for which he should now raise the loser ten thousand pound into the bargain, and cry quits for ever. The immediate pressure for money, and the debts of honor which they owed, induced each to close with the proposition. Archer won,—procured him the ten thousand pound of money lenders, with which William paid his ruinous friends. The unfortunate death of my father *first* has obliged him to decamp, and Sir William is now selling every thing. I think the heirs of each
party

party might issue statutes of lunacy against them. However you will rejoice that our ten thousands are all paid by Sir William Archer. In the evening (for I trust you will dine here) I will settle matters about hiring you all my guests for a couple of months, when I will push all my interest with the *great* to get something for you. My father's prohibition, George, is my only excuse for not doing this before. He excused himself from staying dinner that day, from the secret conviction that his brother designed he should not, but promised on the following morning to breakfast with her, and talk over her present kind plans to serve him. She bid him not be angry at an offer she was ashamed to make, but her finances were at so low an ebb just now, that she could only send her little
nephew

nephew that little piece of paper as an earnest of her good intentions. George took it with thanks, for he was already beholden to the civility of his landlord, and this would discharge it. He went and shared a friendly dinner with Jack Stanhope, who had just come into the living Lady Elenor Montague had promised him; for all the prior engagements were to be fulfilled by the fortunate winner.

When the morning brought Mr. George Montague and the Haleboroughs together, they repeated their desire to see both their brother and sister their guests, and proposed to George the taking a small house at Islington, Brompton, or elsewhere, contiguous to town, as they could then so frequently get to each other. The cordiality of Lord Haleborough was now equal with
his

his wife's—he offered to lend him a hundred pounds,—his carriage should bring up his family, and his cart should convey their necessary baggage when the time arrived. George anticipated the pleasure his Louisa would reap from all this negociation, and accepted their offer of taking an early dinner with them on the following Monday, and returning to town in their post coach all together.

The hours seemed more tardy than ever while Louisa was unacquainted with the friendly exertions now made by the Haleboroughs. Hope sat paramount on George's front, as he embraced his loved woman, in the course of the evening, to whom he related every event the journey had brought to his knowledge.

“ Well ! ”

“ Well !” said Louisa, “ tho’ fortune and splendour, the power of doing good, and the satisfaction resulting from it, are the pursuits, the occupations, and rewards of your sister: yet the privation of these things occasions me *one* most sincere enjoyment, the intimate knowledge of this estimable woman, our embarrassments have brought forth all her virtues. This exquisitely amiable sister, who deprives herself of even necessary gratifications to serve us, has awakened the most grateful sensations in my heart. The bare *feel* alone, is worth a fortune. George was always charmed at the inclination he saw in his wife to elevate his sisters in his eyes—to make all the extreme inconveniences she experienced, a matter too trifling to be seriously thought of, and her unremitting endeavours to see
every

every thing on its most advantageous side, tho' in effect, she acted with so much caution, in all her domestic expences and affairs, that she proved she did not deceive herself, with the prospects of obtaining independence, tho' she cheered and animated her husband, by saying, " Riches could not make her more happy than she was in poverty, while possessing his esteem and affection."

C H A P. XXI.

ALL this whole week was spent in adjusting their little baggage, and discharging their debts, which were indeed very few, as well as hiring a neat country girl, the farmer's daughter, to attend little George while she staid at her brother's; for hitherto she had wholly attended the child herself, and engaged the people at the farm to do every thing relative to the apartment. George's chief conversation was the probable list in his regiment, as the Colonel was a particular friend of both Haleborough's and Pearcefield's; but if that even failed, *they* had interest either in England or Ireland to procure him

him a place, and *now* was the first time that they had dared to exert themselves in his favour. William had very great interest with the Minister; he would write to him, and request him to serve him in that quarter—in short, his mind was so tranquillized, and his disposition so sanguine, that in idea he already had obtained all his wishes.

When Monday arrived, it brought with it the kind friends who had promised to come and partake their dinner. A more happy party *quarre* could scarcely be conceived, for the obligers and the obliged were alike so. Louisa had provided every thing with her usual ease and good management. After dinner, an early dish of tea enabled them to quit the farm on the child's account at five o'clock. The sincere pleasure Lady Haleborough received at obtaining

obtaining this wish of her heart, was in a few days evident in her countenance; her spirits, which were worn down by intense reflection on her husband's dangerous set of connexions, unpaid tradesmen, and propensity to game, were improved by banishing *thought* at least for the present. She exerted herself with the *great*, to assist her brother, who all *wished* that they might be able to serve him—*while she spoke*, but never thought further about the matter, when she was absent.

Lord Haleborough lent him the hundred pound, and Louisa and George had agreed to take a neat lodging at Islington, at twenty guineas a year, but Lady Haleborough rather advised them to take a small unfurnished house at sixteen guineas, and she would enable them to furnish it in a great measure,

with overplus furniture my Lord had desired her to pick out of the rest, which abounded in their house. In three weeks all was ready for their reception at their new abode, and an excellent housemaid, who had lived at Mr. Montague's in Cavendish-square, solicited to be their servant, which gave them much satisfaction. The little girl who attended the child, was taken off Louisa's hands by Lady Haleborough, and thus were they settled.

C H A P. XXII.

IN this manner did three years elapse without George's acquiring any promotion or place. Lieutenant's pay was literally all he had to depend upon, though a ten pound bank note now and then made its welcome appearance from Lady Haleborough, whose family was at this time increased by two daughters. The Marchioness of Pearcefield was now with her husband at Gibraltar, who kept her purse with the same limitations he had hitherto done, though in the main he behaved very affectionately to her. Charlotte Montague had received two thousand pound at her father's death, quitted the convent, and

married an English wine-merchant at Bourdeaux. The man broke, died in jail, and his wife in child-bed at Lyons, where the infant was left at her lodgings without a creature interested in its fate : but upon searching her papers, a few lines, addressed to Mrs. George Montague, to the care of Lady Haleborough, was found sealed up. The letter was forwarded to England, and was a request, that she would receive her infant, and protect it. " I believe," said she, " the extreme injuries I have done you will, in so perfect a mind as your's, be an argument in my child's favour. You will *doubt* whether you forgive the offender (who is no more, if this ever reaches your hands) unless you prove it to *yourself* by this great act. I die in the security of your exalted virtues, and the benefit

my

my infant will receive from your care and precepts."

Extraordinary as this letter was to the woman she had so basely injured, her confidence in Louisa was just. With three young ones of her own, she felt for the destitute little Atkinson more tenderly than if she had never experienced the severe rubs of fortune for them. She got a person, who was going to Paris to purchase millenery, to undertake the journey to Lyons, and come with the child by sea to England. She had prevailed upon George to indulge her in the first request she had ever mentioned in opposition to his wishes, and the little Louisa Atkinson had been already under the protection of the Montagues for a twelvemonth, when Lord Haleborough was appointed our ambassador at a Northern court, and

with his Countess prepared to quit England to take his new honours upon him.

The embarrassment her husband had known in pecuniary affairs made Lady Haleborough receive great satisfaction from this appointment, and did away the chagrin she would of necessity feel at parting with her loved brother and sister. Government had appointed the *Chargé des Affaires*, and Secretary, which excluded George from either situation ; but as my Lord was promised the nomination in case either of these grew vacant, he assured his brother-in-law he should not only have it, but the means of removal also, when it happened. " Rest secure," said he, " that I will remit you whatever you require upon so joyful an occasion." Louisa, indeed, felt the greatest regret at part-
ing

ing with a friend and sister she so affectionately and so deservedly loved and esteemed.

This event brought Mr. Montague and Lady Elenor again to England, who had by retrenchments paid off, from Lady Elenor's estate, the different debts which they left unsatisfied at quitting the kingdom. They proposed going to reside nine months out of twelve in the country. He had sold out of the guards, and consequently had no employment to detain him in town, though a little French woman, who had been the amusement of his leisure hours abroad, was invited to follow him, and promised commodious apartments in Clarges-street, which he had formerly hired for a female friend, who had deserted him for the arms of another. Lady Elenor was no stranger

to either of these connexions, for her Abigail was her bosom friend, told her all the intelligence she gathered from her equals abroad, and added whatever her fertile imagination supplied, in the form of conjecture. Lord and Lady Haleborough, however, for the sake of George and Louisa, wished to restore the brothers to a good understanding; they therefore dispatched a nursery-maid of their own to take charge of the infants at Islington, while the father and mother spent a few days with them. The brothers were all cordiality—William profuse in his promises of serving George if he would go into orders, and advising him to sell his commission immediately, when the ladies, who had been dressing, made their appearance. William had not yet seen his sister since his return. Never was there such
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an improvement he thought; indeed her beauty was even encreased from what it was, when she married. He absolutely gazed with astonishment, and told George he had no conception she was equal to what he beheld. He was so taken up with his enthusiasm, that when he saw Lady Elenor's carriage stop at his brother's, he met her on the stairs, as much to tell her she would be charmed, as to beg her to make some excuse for keeping the dinner a full hour beyond its time.

If his wife did not comply with this request, it was really owing to her ignorance of it, for the unfortunate approbation he had given the woman she hated, had so wholly overset her, that she did not hear a syllable of it. The day however was spent in harmony, for the five were in thorough good humour

at heart, and Lady Elenor counterfeited a satisfaction which passed current at least with Louisa. The following day they returned this dinner, to which was invited many fashionable people, and some foreigners they had made acquaintance with abroad; when Lady Haleborough presented Louisa with a beautiful silk dress, ready made up (from one of her other gowns which she had secreted for the purpose) with a pale straw petticoat, sash, and purple-dress bonnet, which every body wore, with three pale straw-coloured feathers, and the universal bandeau of "God save the King." The admiration she met with from every creature, though in silence, created new spleen in Lady Elenor's heart, which was heightened by the unexpected information of Charlotte Montague's having committed her child

to her care. Monsieur Du Barre was giving an account of his voyage from Bourdeaux, with the English milliner who told him the story, without mentioning any names, but Atkinson; and the desire he had to know whether the English humanity, great as it was acknowledged to be, was up to all this. Louisa's complexion was so extremely heightened by this discourse, that her husband (whose pride at this moment was in its zenith) explained the affair, and said Louisa had adopted his unfortunate neice. Mr. Du Barre was confounded at having introduced a family anecdote, but every other person joined him in half-concealed admiration of the infant's amiable and interesting protectress. While Lady Elenor joined with her lips, she conceived that Louisa

was conscious she had injured Charlotte Montague by some falsehood or other, and wished to make an atonement to heaven for it. "The thing is so unnatural," said she to herself, "to endure an enemy's child, that I know from *myself*, she must have some secret reason for her wonderful humanity."

C H A P. XXIII.

THE party encreased in the evening, but the gentlemen had not quitted the table when the visiting raps began, as the names were announced in the hall. George heard the Earl of Belhammond proclaimed, and quitting the room, he hastened up stairs to spare Louisa the flury of meeting a wretch so unworthy. He led her into the second room, and then down stairs, returned to whisper William to make their excuses to Lady Elenor, but that they were obliged to return to Lord Haleborough's to tea. He carried her off, reproaching Lady Elenor for visiting the Earl, when she knew they could not, nor would

would not fit down in the same room with the scoundrel. Louisa reminded him, that Lord Belhammond was so intimate, he came often uninvited, and possibly Lady Elenor might be as sorry as they were. Lady Haleborough, however, when she returned, put the matter beyond a doubt, for she said, she never was so surprised as to hear Lady Elenor regret that he had an engagement at an earlier hour.

The Haleborough's advised George to forbear since he had taken his revenge by carrying off his wife. Lady Elenor had certainly done this designedly to offend them, and they therefore owed it to her husband to take less notice of it, as he was all cordiality and attention. But George said, "he should think he deserved to meet such affronts; if he could pass them by without resenting

senting them, he should tax Lady Elenor with unkindness the instant he saw her." Louisa's meditations, however, effected the change of her husband's resolves. "See William first," said she, "he will set all to rights, I know."

At this very time was William extremely angry with Lady Elenor for having invited Belhammond ; he thought it a most unpardonable insult to Louisa ; and was he in his brother's place, he would never forgive it. "Oh, my dear," said her Ladyship, "don't be uneasy about *his* taking offence ; he will never do *that*, where there's a dinner to be had, or money to be extorted."

"For God's sake, Lady Elenor," replied her husband, "suffer me to respect you. He flapt the door as he said it, slept out that night, and took a coffee-house dinner

dinner in the city next day, where he would avoid meeting either George or Lord Haleborough. In the evening a late saunter home, however, was attended with this interview. William began with an apology—assured his brother, Lady Elenor was quite sorry she had unthinkingly asked Lord Belhammond, and requested him to entreat Louisa's forgiveness. George really felt for his brother, who looked vexed to the soul, shook his head, and said, he thought no more about it; they returned to Lord Haleborough's to supper, and William from thence to his own house, after giving this ample proof of his resentment of his wife.

The Haleboroughs had behaved charmingly to their brother and sister, and gave them another fifty pound at parting, with the hope of still serving George.

George. Lord Haleborough allowed his wife leave to acquaint Louisa, that upon any immergent occasion of illness, or any other cause, she might draw upon him for another sum of that value, which he would credit. These dear friends parted with all the affection imaginable; and William Montague promised his interest anew to his brother.

When William made this promise, he was as truly in earnest as Lady Haleborough; but the perpetual jealousy and suggestions of Lady Elenor made him so uncomfortable, that he deserted his brother by degrees. He reproached himself for pusillanimity; but he could not recover the superiority he had lost. Little Brisac was infinitely more pleasing than these reflexions, and he hastened to forget all his chagrins in the society of his mistress.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIV.

NOW the Montagues had deserted town, and the Haleboroughs were abroad, George and his wife had no inducement to visit town for above a day at a time. Sir George Berkland was in the North, and report said, was going to be married extremely well to a charming Scotch girl, who was excessively admired for her wit and good sense, which, upon enquiry, proved to be one of Abercrombie's nieces. She had remained in England with an aunt, who had taken her to Edinburgh; this information gave Louisa sincere pleasure. Sir George had been twice in London since Louisa's marriage, but
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he then told Lady Haleborough, that he believed it was best for his peace of mind to keep at a distance from her. "I may settle myself, perhaps," said he, "if I preserve this resolution; but I am persuaded all my affection will return; and I shall be wretched if I ever renew the acquaintance. Louisa received double pleasure from the present report, because she had learnt this conversation at the time from Lady Haleborough, who had always been his warm advocate with Miss Mathews, from the instant he professed his attachment.

As her children grew older, Louisa found her expences encrease in spite of every endeavour to keep them under. She had now four of her own, and little Louisa Atkinson not only to feed, but to clothe; and she found that the pay
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of a lieutenant, without the assistance of her friends, was quite insufficient to procure them necessaries. George wrote an account of his situation to William, but no answer arrived:—uneasy, pressed by his landlord, persecuted by a taylor, to whom he owed about twelve pounds, and threatened with an arrest, he went down to his brother's country-seat, found every thing there in the utmost confusion, two executions in the house. Lady Elenor and the child was at Bath, and Mr. Montague, who brought down Brisac to beguile the time of his wife's absence, had had some jealous quarrel with her the night previous to her flight, when she took off all Lady Elenor's cloaths, laces, and trinquets; luckily her jewels escaped by being with her at Bath. William Montague was so enraged at this robbery by a mistress he had

had lavished every thing upon, that he persuaded her immediately to regain the apparel, before his wife heard a syllable of the affair. He no sooner followed Brisac, than the servants imagined he was gone off entirely with her; the report spread like wildfire; executions were brought in, and an express sent to Lady Elenor. George was thunder-struck with this intelligence, which, for a while, suspended the sense of his own misfortunes; he returned to town, where the first person he met, was the old porter who had lived at Lord Haleborough's. "I ask your honour's pardon," said the man; "but I hopes the news about Mr. William Montague an't true;—'tis a hundred pities to lose his life in such a cause."

Poor George reeled to the rails; the man caught him, and took him into
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the baker's on the opposite side of the way ; " for God's sake," said George to the porter, " tell me what you have heard ? I know nothing."

" 'Tis all in the papers, Sir," Duncombe replied. " Mr. Montague was going after that Madame Brisac he has kept so long,—at Calais he overtook her with Col. Rienhault, who had waited her arrival—high words ensued—Mr. Montague challenged the Colonel, and poor Mr. Montague fell, Sir, at the second fire."

George heard it out, and was so overcome with the cruel intelligence, that tho' he could so ill afford it, he was obliged to take a hackney coach for Islington. All his tendernefs for his brother was alive at this instant, he forgot all his unkindneffes, and remembered all his affectionate actions with interest.

interest. Louisa was extremely uneasy at the absence of her husband for the whole day, when he bid her postpone the dinner for half an hour beyond the usual time, which proved that he meant to return. She had sent her little ones to bed, and fauntered out into the little court-yard before her door, to listen and look for his return—her anxiety gained strength. “God of Heaven preserve my loved George,” said she, with her eyes swimming in tears; for the threatened arrest had seized her mind at the instant, when she heard a coach stop, and distinguished her husband’s voice order the coachman to set him down there. “Heaven be praised,” said she, without knowing she uttered it aloud. George caught the grateful acknowledgment, and replied, “my dearest, I fear I have made you very uneasy;

uneasy;" with one hand round her waist, and the other in her's, he walked into the house. "I see," said she, "something has happened, tell me my dearest life,—have you been arrested,—for mercies sake explain;—nothing has happened to *me*, he replied, be easy my dear,—poor William is very ill. By degrees he broke every thing to her, and the share she took in what so particularly affected her husband in some measure, alleviated his grief. The *cause* of his death awakened all Louisa's pity for Lady Elenor; for an instant she supposed *herself* in the same situation; but the idea had so much horror annexed to it, that she shrunk from the pang. My dear love, said she, we ought to alleviate Lady Elenor's distresses, if possible; perhaps your going down,—continuing there for a few days, and assisting

assisting her in arranging her affairs, might be very acceptable at such a time.

I pity her now from my soul—I know she is not partial to me, and therefore I don't offer to go, but you can answer for *me*, if she expresses the smallest wish to have me assist her."

"Louisa," said George—"you are an angel,"——

"Indeed," my dear, "I think I should be less than woman, if I could retain any sentiments at such a time. What do you say to going to her to-morrow? I suppose she is returned to night at latest? George replied, that he would follow her advice if he could borrow a couple of guineas for his pocket, but he really had spent the few shillings he had, for the hackney coach to bring him home. "I will walk to town in the morning with my watch,

and dispose of it, if I can; if I cannot, I shall return to you at dinner-time."

Louisa recollected that she had an Irish muslin unmade up, which the Marchioness of Pearcefield had sent her; she said nothing, but advising George to take his tea in bed, she stepped to the Mantua-maker in the same street, told her she would be obliged to her for getting it off her hands, and requested her to advance her what she thought proper. She gave Mrs. Montague three guineas, and said, she hoped it would fetch a couple more; with much pleasure Louisa carried up a basket of tea and the cash together. Her husband was not surprized at her goodness, though his countenance was so expressive of obligation, that a stranger would have conceived it was novel to him.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXV.

LOUISA urged him to allow her to take him a place in the stage; for the affliction he had known on his brother's account, had made him pass a sleepless night; he complied with her wish, but previously walked into the childrens rooms to give the parting kifs for two or three days. The little dears were as usual, all life and free; and Louisa Atkinson, who was a very interesting creature, assured him, she would make her aunt much more merry to-day, than she was yesterday.

During the absence of George, the trades-people became more clamorous than they had hitherto been; they pres-

fed Mrs. Montague to name *when* they might be paid; she replied, that the death of her husband's brother had distressed them much; that at George's return they would see what they could do, and the tradesfolks should be informed of it immediately; the debts, said she, are about sixty pound altogether; they shall be discharged most honourably if you will but give us a little time. At length they agreed to wait one month, provided she would lay out ready money with them during the term. She regretted that *that* was impossible; she had it not now, but would undertake to pay them at the appointed time; for she recollected Lady Haleborough's promise about her husband advancing fifty pound on any emergency; but though they appeared to assent, when the maid went for provisions,

visions, they refused sending any without prompt payment.

Of all blessings in the world a collected mind in trying situations is the most advantageous. Louisa trembled from head to foot, but yet this fortitude never forsook her. There is no shame in poverty, thought she to herself, and if there *was*, it would not stand in competition with my childrens claims upon me. She selected all her unmade-up pieces of lace, muslin, and Irish cloth, and bidding the maid carry them to the mantua-makers, she immediately followed. "I am in such want of cash," said Louisa, "that I entreat you to sell these for me as soon as possible, and let me pay you any reasonable demand for your trouble." "I'll sell them Ma'm with pleasure," said the woman, "without any reward,

I should'nt act like a Christian if I could take a fee for such a little favor, when I knows your situation. My heart achs Ma'm when I sees you and your lovely children, because I knows you be born quality."

Louisa really was the child of nature, she shook the good woman's hand, and swallowed the gulp which prevented her speaking. Mrs. Duncombe, (for she was the porter's sister, who had lived at Lord Haleborough's,) had heard all the family events from her brother, when George and his wife first came to Islington, though, till this instant, Louisa did not suspect a soul in the neighbourhood knew any thing of her. Her purse was replenished with two guineas now, and in the course of the week, she received nine more from the sale of some articles Lady Haleborough, William,

William, and Lucy, had thrown into her lap at various times. This money she housewised for running expences, till George and she could determine on what steps to take.

A tender and affectionate letter from the Marchioness of Pearcefield, afforded Louisa a suspension of her cares, she really required. She earnestly entreated that one of the little girls might be spared to her; having no children of her own, she wished much for a little companion; the Marquis was surprized she had never expressed this desire before—gave her permission not only to take one, but to undertake its education, and promised to pay all expences of conveying it to Ireland. Louisa felt both pleasure and pain at this invitation; she postponed any determination about it till George's return.

C H A P. XXVI.

GUESS her surprise when during the undressing, washing, and combing her children, she saw George alight from the stage. He related his visit to Lady Elenor and her refusal of any services *whatever* by a servant, who carried up his request to be admitted. Her reply was, "that she was in too much affliction to see company." He then wrote half a dozen lines to express his concern at the melancholy event, and his offers of service, by performing any commission, or transacting any business for her, when she sent down, "her compliments, and she had not the smallest occasion to trouble him." I asked
the

the servant for my nephew, he replied, "he is now with my lady;" "tell him," said I, "that his uncle wishes to speak with him." I waited half an hour, when the servant said, "Master was with Mamma." "Was you bid to tell me so John?" "Yes, Sir," answered the man, "my lady bid me say, Master Montague was with his mamma."

"You may be certain, my dear, that I did not spend *quite* another minute in her house. She had read my letter, I suppose, where I wished to get part of what *ought* to have been my own, from my brother.—I bless God, you preserved me from becoming the husband of such a worthless woman. Welcome, thrice welcome poverty, since you preserved me from this connection; but I was preserved for an inestimable blessing in my Louisa. I think I may defy

the world to make me miserable while you continue as you are." He had eat nothing since he went, for his indignation preserved him from hunger. She had with her own hand made a veal pie for the morrow, which was Sunday, and gathering a fallad herself, while he stood at her elbow, they returned to their supper, when her usual talents were exerted to lighten the burthen which oppressed the heart of her husband, by disguising the weight which hung on her *own*. A bottle of wine was had from the tavern, and George arose from his meal in a frame of mind very different from that he sat down with.

"Well," said he, after looking to the window-fastenings as usual, "I had better have expended my fifteen shillings upon bells to these shutters than

than on Lady Elenor ; from my soul I grudge it." " So don't I," said Louisa, "there is a satisfaction in doing as we would be done by, though to our hindrance. I pity *her*, not ourselves—what pleasure does she debar herself of! The ties of kindred are the sweetest I know. There is a littleness in not being obliged. I declare the most satisfactory moments of my life have been detached from those you have occasioned ; the favours I have received from your poor father formerly, and your sisters since my marriage."

On the morrow she thought it proper to acquaint him with the immediate resources she had found through Mrs. Duncombe, and the conversation she had had with the trades-people. " Let us struggle with fortitude, my dear George," said his wife ; " we are both

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young,

young ; better days may arrive, you know ; but while we have health and spirits, and our little creatures are well, we may surely make light of every thing else. *You* have often designed to sell your commission ; *I* have as often opposed it ; because, while your family was resident in London, I thought there was a chance of promotion ; I give that hope up. This would not only pay our debts, but leave a little for our expences of food, and necessaries. I will get work from Mrs. Duncombe, nobody need know any thing of the matter ; and besides, that I think we shall be obliged to take lodgers."

" That is impossible," said her husband. " Not my dear life, when our children want bread," said Louisa ; let us, dear George, accommodate ourselves to our circumstances. I mean, if
you

you please, to part with our maid; the children are easily managed. Don't you like your dinner the *less* if I prepare it; and I am sure I shall never regret the employment, except that it takes me from your society." "No, my Louisa, my soul's darling, I never will suffer you to labour for me, I will sell my commission. Abercrombie was to return about this time, I will enquire; and if he is not likely to return, I will try to be clerk in a counting-house—correct for the booksellers, or strike out some path." She now shewed him a letter which she kept as a *bon bouche*; the Marchioness's kind offer of taking a child, which extremely rejoiced its father, who felt all possible affection for his little one's.

No time was lost in putting up the commission to sale, yet two months elapsed

elapsed before it was compleated. Mrs. Duncombe's niece had the care of little Elisa to convey to her aunt the Marchioness, and the fond mother relinquished a child so excessively dear to her, though attended with the deepest regrets, since her doing so would promote its advantage. At seven years old her mother had taught her reading, writing, French, and accounts; and her father had instructed her to play the guitar, from ear, which she possessed in an eminent degree; genteel in her person, and gentle in her disposition, there was little dread of her not being loved by the uncle, as well as the aunt, who indeed adopted her as their own child in every respect.

While the sale of the commission was pending, the trades-people in their neighbourhood suffered them to go on, pro-

provided they paid ready money. The anniversary of their wedding-day was always so sincerely hailed in their hearts, that they threw away every care to acknowledge the truth of their pleasures being infinitely superior to the pains they had hitherto known. "In fact," said Louisa, "our pains have originated more from the *anticipation* of evil, than the evil itself." We have *dreaded* a prison—but never seen one; *dreaded* the want of a dinner—but never felt it—apprehended our landlord, but never met a harsh sentence from him. Could we but have resolved to avoid the *dreads*, we should have been the happiest pair in the world, without any alloy. Let us adopt this wise maxim to-day, George—I hope to be happy without alloy."

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVII.

MR S. Duncombe, who had learnt from Mary that this was the day of all others most dear to this interesting pair—procured them a very fine sol, and a lobster for sauce, which she begged them to accept, as a friend had made her a present of fish, and she did not care for it. They were with their children, sitting down to this and a boiled neck of mutton, when they heard the maid's voice loud in the passage, say, "I will tell you, my masters in London," the knife dropped from Louisa's head—she sunk on the floor, George was rushing out of the parlour window; but he saw the situation of his

his wife, heard the screams of his children, and returned. "I am *here*, Mary," said he, "*ready* for whoever wants me. Let them come in, without this permission." Two men were before them; Louisa could not speak, though she clung round the arm of her husband: he enquired at whose suit this arrest was, and was informed it was the taylor's. He then sent Mary to the several people (householders) he knew in the neighbourhood; and explaining again about his commission, he entreated some of them to bail him. They replied, "That his debt was too deep for that manœuvre to take. Louisa, without hat or cloak, stepped to Mrs. Duncombe, she could not speak, but taking her arm, and looking wildly, — led her home. When the good woman understood the distress, she lamented she was
not

not a house-keeper to bail Mr. Montague, or had money sufficient to pay the debt. She tried to console *the inconsolable* Louisa, who insisted upon accompanying her husband to the spunging-house, which George by every persuasion intreated her *not* to do, "obey me, my beloved wife, I pray you, obey me."

"Wife, or not wife," said one of the men, "that's the prettiest creature I ever clapt my eyes on." George now knocked him down with a stick; he rose and attempted to strike George, but Louisa threw herself between, and prevented the stroke. The other fellow held his comrade till the passion subsided, and without any ceremony, emptied the solitary bottle of wine Louisa had purchased to let all her family drink the return of the day. A coach was called, while Louisa with ardour recommended

recommended her husband and children to heaven—urged Mary to attend the dear children, and to make herself easy, for they would not be absent long. With an astonishing degree of fortitude she kissed the little creatures, and taking her husband's arm, got into the coach. They were carried to a spunging-house, from whence George wrote to the army agent, who immediately remitted him money sufficient to discharge the debt; but when he did this, and desired to pay the fees of the house, he learnt that the baker at Islington had lodged a detainer against him. Louisa now drew upon Lord Haleborough, and tried to negotiate the note; but the name of Montague had sunk so extremely in the opinion of the world, that no creature would take it. She went to his banker, whose name she recollected,

collected, and represented her situation, her connection, and the liberty Lord Haleborough gave her, which the banker replied to, by asking for the letter of permission. She told him it was a verbal permission, if he would negotiate the draft he might withhold the money till my Lord paid the bill. This the banker agreed to try, and struck with the astonishing beauty and delicacy of the pleader, he said, he would even advance her ten guineas, and as his carriage was at the door carry her to her house. She sincerely thanked him, for to *her* the gaze she excited wherever her face was beheld, was the most irksome thing in the world.

When she returned to her husband, she found him perusing a letter which Mary had sent from the house at Islington——was from Abercrombie abroad,

abroad, who informed him, that a paralytic stroke had been the cause of his silence to two letters for so long a time; that William Montague had left a will appointing him executor, and guardian to his son, which obliged him to return to England as soon as the weather grew more favourable for an invalid; that he hoped George's affairs were better, as he never complained, and trusted he should be able to drink *Captain* Montague's health in the course of the month, as the Colonel had absolutely promised, under his own hand, that this promotion should take place.

"Good God," said George, "how unfortunate am I; with Captain's pay, I could have lived like a prince. At the moment of success I have blindly parted with my commission, and we are undone." Louisa was stung to the soul,

soul, "and I am the cause," said she; "it was my ill-judged advice that led you to sell it; I have injured both husband and children for ever. Let me go to the agent, perhaps all is not lost, sell our Islington furniture to reimburse him that he advanced, and continue here with our infants till Abercrombie's return. Oh George, if you droop, I am lost; keep up your spirits, my life, and spare me the reproach of having brought you to ruin." He approved of her going to the agent, provided Mary went with her. Louisa desired Mary by a few lines to lock up the house—bring all the children in a coach to Chancery-lane to amuse their father, and whatever provision she had for them. Then she advised her husband to write a note to the agent, as he was not even personally acquainted with him.

him. This was immediately done, requesting him to accompany Mr. Montague back to him, if possible; but if not, to allow her an opportunity of explaining the nature of her business.

C H A P. XXVIII.

THE same coach which brought Mary and the babes carried her mistress and her to Mr. Nicholson the agent's house in Red Lion Square. The servant said his master was at home, and opened the coach door, when she was led into a room where two gentlemen were conversing at the window. She drew out her pocket-book to be employed about something, and render her less noticed by strangers. She waited, and waited, till recollecting the expence of the coach would be enormous, she ordered Mary to step down and discharge it. During her doing so, Mr. Nicholson entered, and as he made his bow

bow to a lady he had never seen, she heard one of the strangers say to the other, after a laugh and half whisper,

"But to prevent the least reproach,

"Betty comes with her in the coach."

The suffusion this speech occasioned, and the native modesty of Louisa, rendered her so exquisitely beautiful at this instant, (for grief had made her excessively pale before) that Mr. Nicholson scarcely knew what she had said. She gave him the letter, and after he had read it, requested to speak to him in another apartment; but the Gentlemen told Nicholson that they would call some other day, as they were sure he would excuse their absence. She told him her husband's situation, and the hope that the lieutenancy was not yet disposed of beyond redemption, and gave him her reasons for wishing to retain it.

“How unfortunate” said Nicholson, “this affair is! The very man who spoke to me is the purchaser, as I have urged him to lose no time, wishing to serve Abercrombie. I am quite unacquainted with Mr. Dorset, but I will go to him, see what can be done, and let you know the result in the evening. Would to God I may be able to regain it! as I am little inclined to distress a Gentleman for whom I feel so perfect an esteem.”

Mrs. Montague drew her bonnet over her face, and walked back to the spunging-house in Chancery-lane, where she found the man of the house at high words with George. “With these children, indeed,” said he, “you had better go to Newgate at once, for you never can pay, I’ll be sworn, for their keep, in *my* house. Unless you pays me from day

to

to day, I'll not trust ye ; look ye, Sir, I'll be paid afore-hand for every thing you have." George only desired him to leave the room just then, he would satisfy him for every thing in a little time. Poor Louisa was astonished and frightened to death—she told him to bring up his bill, she could pay it, and entreated him not to flurry her so perpetually. She related the hope Mr. Nicholson entertained, that Mr. Dorset would relinquish his claim on so extraordinary an occasion. But hope had fled from the bosom of George ; he abandoned himself to the keenest despair ; and poor Louisa, whose fortitude was exerted hitherto to preserve her husband, now sunk under the pressure of affliction, which levelled its arrows at their hearts. A shower of tears from her, recalled Mr. Montague to a

just sense of his cruelty, in giving way to his despair. He began talking to little George about his exercise; and when he saw Louisa's face illumined by returning peace, he entreated her pardon for his unpardonable weakness. Her sufferings were the means of wringing his soul. "For heaven's sake, my love," replied Louisa, "forbear this conversation, we neither of us have strength for it." He entreated her to eat a piece of cold lobster, and drink a glass of wine, which restored her in some measure. Mary was ordered to take the children home again, and Louisa attempted, in vain, to disguise the ravages which four days and nights of incessant care and fatigue, had made in her health. She was combing her husband's hair, who complained of a violent head-ach, and anticipating his liberation,

bration, at least, in a few days, as the banker would hear from Lord Haleborough's, when Mr. Nicholson, the agent, had entered the room before they perceived him; but his countenance told them he had not succeeded with Mr. Dorset, who was gone out of town, but where he could not learn.

"God's will be done," said Louisa. Mr. Nicholson offered to do any service, by acquainting his friends with his situation. His wife was so intimate with Lady Elenor, that she would undertake any office to serve Mr. Abercrombie; but George knew how fruitless any application to that quarter would prove, and therefore declined it. Mr. Dorset had not paid the money, owing to Nicholson's engagement that day, but had promised the clerk

to be in town again in the week. The agent took his leave with regrets that he had not succeeded in his attempt to serve them.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIX.

DAY after day, and week after week, did George and his wife try to obtain this money by letters, and visits to Red Lion Square, when, to their inexpressible mortification, they heard that Mr. Nicholson, who was a private agent and professed advertising money lender, had broke and decamped. I will not attempt to describe what each party endured at this information,—they sat stupified for a time; at length George broke silence, with urging Louisa to take something; every thing was indurable but her dejection. This speech roused her; she proposed going to Islington, and having every thing

put up to sale, the produce would liberate him, and pay the whole debt, provided it was not encreased by delay. He assented to this, and begged her to look forward with hope to Abercrombie's coming. Not a word from the Banker about Lord Haleborough's note, which they wondered at, but till he was certain it was good, he was justified for withholding the remainder of the money.

When Louisa got to Islington, she found some strange faces in the passage, and beheld a man taking an inventory of the goods, and Mary, with Louisa Atkinson in her arms, in a slow fever, crying and entreating the people to forbear till her master's return. The landlord had seized for his rent, and being an Attorney, he managed every thing himself. Louisa had scarcely
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power to feel the force of this new grief. Mary brought Mrs. Duncombe, who felt so extremely for her situation, that she promised to take all the children when the house was cleared, till Mr. and Mrs. Montague could do something for them. Louisa called *in* the Apothecary to the little Atkinson, who appeared dangerously ill, and with her eldest boy walked back to Chancery-Lane.

Here she grew so excessively ill, that she was unable to go out of the room, tho' she laid her confinement all to the score of *tire*; but George was not to be so deceived. She thought any thing which employed him was doing a kindness, and therefore begged him to make her a dish of coffee, and a little bit of dry toast, and she should be well again. While they were drinking a dish to-

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gether,

gether, a letter from Lady Haleborough, who knew nothing about their present sufferings, with a twenty pound note, arrived at their hands. Some hope now dawned on Louisa,—she had suppressed the events at Islington, because she dreaded their effects upon George. She brushed up her looks, and improved his exhausted spirits a little before she began, and prefacing the relation, with conjuring him to rise superior to misfortune, by manfully sustaining it, told him what steps the Attorney, their landlord, had taken. Fortified with Lady Haleborough's letter, he supported this intelligence with firmness, and endeavoured to console Louisa with the hope of Abercrombie's coming in the week; but, alas! poor Abercrombie had paid the debt of nature; letters were received in town that
a second

a second paralytic stroke had deprived him of life. George had experienced many severe strokes of fortune—but in his situation,—at such a time,—and elevated by hope, *this* was too much. Louisa was not able to afford him consolation, reposing her own confidence in God—she entreated her husband to rely upon *him*, that they should yet be extricated out of their miseries.

C H A P. XXX.

SHE walked on the following evening to Islington, where she found the little girl much worse, and the maid informed her that the apothecary declared the child to be in great danger. She felt a maternal anguish for the fate of this little being ; and notwithstanding her own, her husband's, and her childrens distresses, she determined to be at the expence of a physician to the Montague family (who never passed a turnpike under two guineas) she believed his skill had saved two infants, who were given over ; and she knew that she should reproach herself if she did not exert herself, if possible, more
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for the child of a repentant enemy, than for her own babes, whom she loved with inexpressible tenderness. Ill as she was herself, and much as her husband required her society which always calmed his agitations, and awakened him to a just sense of what was essentially good, from what was superficially so, she hesitated not to attend the sufferer herself. Two nights and three days, far advanced in a situation which requires indulgences, did this excellent woman attend the orphan ; who, notwithstanding Louisa's care, and the benevolent attention of the physician (who refused when he beheld Mrs. Montague's face, any acknowledgment whatever from his old acquaintance, Miss Matthews) expire in her arms. Soon after this event she rejoined her husband, who had willingly yielded the consolation

consolation, her presence always gave him to the performance of a task she so piously set herself. Great as their concern was for a loss of the child they both loved with parental affection, it was greater from the expences it unavoidably brought with it. Not a creature would let them have any thing without prompt payment. Poor Louisa's philosophy had almost forsaken her, she in vain tried to conceal the anguish of her soul, though she suppressed all complaint. Her husband saw the struggle and dreaded its consequences; he urged her to talk to him to relieve her full heart by opening it to one so tenderly interested in it, and entreating her as she valued her health and his repose (synonimous terms) that she would have immediate advice. With her he could bear the most cruel situations, bereft

berest of her the world was a chaos. Though long experience had told her she was infinitely dear to her loved George, yet these re-assurances of a tenderness, which never slept, gave her the relief she required; a plentiful burst of tears soon recomposed her, and they jointly agreed, that though the world had neglected them, they were more than recompenced in the love, friendship, affection, and esteem they each cherished for the other.

A little tap at the door broke up this conversation; the keeper's wife had walked up stairs with the leg and wing of a boiled chicken, she had had for her own supper, and premising it, by saying, her husband was unexpectedly called away, and the lady looked but poorly, she begged her to accept it, as it would do her a world of good. George seconded

seconded the motion, and while Louisa was spreading the napkin, the woman recollected that there was a note, or letter, addressed to Mrs. Montague lying upon the kitchen shelf. When this was brought up it proved to be from the Banker, with an account that Lord Haleborough had accepted the draft; and that the remaining thirty-nine pound ten shillings, was ready for her to receive when she pleased to draw for it. My Reader has little knowledge of the human heart, if he imagines they were capable of eating their supper for a full hour after they had taken their seats. They were quite over-joyed at this seasonable relief, applied it in idea to the removal of both from that distressing situation, and for the funeral of the poor infant. The night was half spent in planning first one thing, then another,

another, till at last it was agreed Mrs. Montague should go to Islington, remove the children to the cheapest place she could find, bid the auctioneer sell the furniture, and take a list of all they owed, as they trusted they should not only be able to pay every body their demands, but have a little sum in hand to go on with. Sleep was so wholly out of her power, that she rose early, and set forward with a lighter heart than she had known for many mornings past, but what a repelling sight did she behold on her arrival! every window closed at eleven o'clock in the day—no little cherub faces playing in the little garden before the house—no exulting voices hail the return of dear mama, which pleasing sounds she had always distinguished at fifty yards distance. Her heart sunk, her knees shook so she
could

could scarcely knock at the door; a second knock brought a neighbour to her window, who said the children and servant were at Mrs. Duncombe's; astonishing as this seemed to Louisa, she yet thought it might have originated from the children being unhappy at home, while the poor child lay unburied. She bent her steps to the mantua-makers, and learnt there from the maid that the landlord had seized, and made an inventory of the goods, which were to be put up to sale that day. Infamous as this conduct had been, at such a moment when their sorrow and situation ought to be respected, she resolved to pay him immediately every just demand, and have another auctioneer, not the landlord's brother, to dispose of the furniture. Mrs. Duncombe accompanied her to the man, who

who was extremely angry to find her armed with her defence, for he had reckoned on the idea of making a large profit upon the goods, the best part of which he meant to buy in, and let his house ready furnished. His rage and indignation were so violent, that he betrayed himself quite. Mrs. Duncombe reproved him in the strongest terms, but poor Louisa was so completely overcome with this morning's walk and discovery, that she said nothing. When she drew upon the Banker for twelve pounds twelve shillings, the man absolutely refused to take the worthless piece of paper,—it was a sham—sure he was no such fool,—didn't he know they were as good as beggars, and should he be choused in that way? not he indeed. Mrs. Duncombe, however, was so convinced that Louisa and
George

George were the most honourable of God's creatures, and therefore she took the draft and brought money for it, with which Louisa satisfied this worthless man. According to his estimation, the goods were worth something short of the half what they sold for. Within the three days she effected the funeral, the sale, and the libration of her husband, who found himself in possession of twenty-seven pound after every debt was discharged at Islington, and also the excessive fees which he was obliged to pay in Chancery-Lane, previous to his enlargement.

C H A P. XXXI.

ALL this necessary business transacted, they were very impatient to get a coach, and quit an abode they had so involuntarily been constrained to dwell in for upwards of three weeks; but a violent storm of thunder, hail, and rain, exercised their patience for near two hours, when the landlord came into the room, and began putting it to rights for a gentleman he hourly expected. Being a very talkative man, he advised Louisa not to be down-cast. "It does no good," said he, "follow my example, Ma'm—I ben't down-cast, tho' I have met a damn'd disappointment to-day. You shall hear now, and judge.

judge. Last night I sees in the Chronicle a deal about the Unclaimed Dividends, and the names of the folks whose property they be. Well! here sees I the name *Joseph Atkinson*, (my wife's name was Atkinson, and her father's name Joe, the gentleman made a pretty fortune by my trade in this here house,) so I looks and I looks till I finds there was upwards of forty thousand pounds in these funds, that no one knowed of,—couldn't eat,—couldn't sleep, it ran so in my head—the names being alike d'ye see. Lord thought I, I'll elbow my betters, it can't do no harm to see after it; so away goes I this morning—devil take the disappointment say I,—*Joe Atkinson* was a Wine Merchant at Bourdeaux, and not my wife's father. I went to a friend of mine, an Attorney, who had a dexterous

terous hand in these cases, but he can't make out no kin to him, and if *he* can't, the devil can't I'm sure."

Poor Louisa appeared to be so totally absorbed in reflection, that she paid no attention to the conversation which passed between the keeper of the spunging-house and her husband. George, however, treasured up every syllable; he asked where he had got this information? the man replied, "at the Secretary's office." Soon as a coach was procured, and their few bundles placed in it, they seated themselves there also, and bid the man drive to Islington. George instantly related what he had learnt of the sailor, and added, that as soon as he had embraced his dear little infants, he would go to the office and enquire about the affair. His wife approved of this plan, but warned him
not

not to expect it should turn out exactly what he would have it, as it might create him a real disappointment. "Out of debt as we now are, I thank God," said she, "and having a few guineas in possession, let us exert ourselves with more earnestness than we have hitherto done. I trust you will suffer me to open, without any loss of time, a day school; work, reading, and French, I can certainly teach; this will procure necessaries for us all, till better days arrive, for you know my love, I never despair. Delicacy has made us suppress our sufferings in a great measure; did either sister know the extremity of our distresses, they would have exerted all their powers to save us from so unmerited a portion. Lady Haleborough has been goodness itself, and the Marchioness assists us in the only way she can,

can, receives and educates our child and indeed, spares a great deal out of the little her husband gives her, in money. Could we have persecuted either of these amiable hearted women, we should have been destitute of all delicacy. Better days I hope are in store; for Lord Haleborough's being upon the spot alone will be a protection, and two months will effect this. For God's sake, dear George, don't look so melancholy—hope, my dearest life—hope as I do.”

“ Did you speak to me, my dear?” replied George, who, tho' he had appeared to attend to her, had never heard one syllable. The Unclaimed Dividends had made him deaf, blind, and inattentive, even to Louisa. He begged her pardon, and told her that he had so strong a presentiment of good arising

from the past evil, that he was entirely occupied by it. "You must go with me my dear, I shall be crazed to know a happiness myself, while you are ignorant of it; so you must quit the brats, and bear me company;"—"willingly," she replied, "for I perceive I must conjure up a thousand blue devils to tame your spirits, lest the joy should prove too much for you; but I declare to you, I have not an idea that we shall profit from our enquiry, because the son, whom you imagine Joseph Atkinson left, died in a prison, for a very trifling debt." "Seriously speaking, my dear," replied George, "I do not reckon much upon it, but nothing is impossible." The coach stopped, and the little ones were in perfect extacy at seeing papa come along with mama, and the satisfaction George felt at receiving

ceiving their infantile careffes, made him forget the impatience he had so lately felt to drive to the Secretary's office. Mrs. Duncombe had begged them to take up with her house till they could fix upon one to their liking; so they agreed to take their dinner with the little angels, and walk fearless of duns or bailiffs to the fountain head for intelligence; but when they arrived there, they learnt that it was a holiday—the next day was Sunday, so that their impatience had not a chance of being satisfied till the expiration of two long tedious days.

C. H. A. P. XXXII.

GEORGE appeared excessively tired at his return, which was very natural, considering he had kept his room for such a length of time ; but the suppressed worry and agitation of his spirits, on the bare possibility of obtaining this unexpected fortune, almost cost him his life ; a fever seized him, which made the same benevolent physician, who attended the little Louisa Atkinson, dread the consequences ; which, however, he concealed from his amiable nurse, feeling every tender commiseration for her situation. The crisis for which he waited with fear, terminated happily ; but the weakness it left behind,

hind, made change of air absolutely necessary. Louisa told her medical friend the circumstance relative to the Unclaimed Dividends, and he kindly undertook to make personal enquiries himself, and bring her the result, during his doing so, George fell asleep, and Louisa addressed three letters to Lady Haleborough, the Marchioness of Pearcefield, and her godmother, Lady Berkland, informing them of George's past illness, and necessary change of air; and laying it open to them, with the hope, that a couple of rooms at some of their country houses might be volunteered to her dear invalid; to her godmother she had addressed a request that she would enquire whether a small cottage in her neighbourhood was unoccupied, and if it was, to ask the proprietor's terms for hiring it for one

month. Scarcely had they been deposited in the post-house, when the physician returned, and with too much satisfaction in his looks, to make Louisa uneasy about his errand, he told her he only required the twentieth part for his trouble, and then read out the paper he held in his hand, which proved that Joseph Atkinson, Wine-merchant of Bourdeaux, was father to John Wickstead Atkinson, who was abroad at the time of his father's sudden death. The physician said this little voyage would do George a great deal of service, and he had best go to gather the particulars on the spot. Within the week they learnt at Bourdeaux, that the old man was reputed to be very rich, but dying suddenly, and no papers being found, the people imagined they had judged wrong. His only son, John Wickstead Atkinson,

Atkinson, was in India at the time; and at his return was much disappointed to find that his father had left a mere trifle behind him. He accordingly set up the same trade, and unfortunately failed. After many years, he again entered into it, and seemed to go on very prosperously till he married an English woman of fashion, who ran him out, and was the cause of his dying in jail. He left all his little property, by will, to the widow, who was shortly after brought to bed of a daughter, which occasioned her death. The infant was sent to England to her uncle and aunt Montague.

As all this intelligence was perfectly satisfactory, George and his wife returned to England, to take possession of a fortune he had a right to, as heir

to his sister, Mrs. Atkinson. As soon as ever the claim was put in, the money was honourably transferred to George Montague.

At their return, Louisa found a letter from Sir George Berkland, in which was enclosed a draft upon his banker for one thousand pound, payable only to herself, entreating her in the most earnest manner to oblige him, by suffering him to be useful to her and Mr. Montague, and assuring her that till he accidentally saw her letter to his mother, he had not the most distant knowledge of her embarrassed situation, or he had certainly made this request sooner. He added, that till lately, he had found it dangerous to his peace to think of her at all, but that things were reversed, for he begged permission to
introduce

introduce Lady Berkland to her acquaintance, as soon as Miss Abercrombie obliged him with receiving a legal right to be called by his name.

C H A P. XXXIII.

PLEASED and grateful as Louisa was to God for this unlooked-for change from misery and total neglect, to affluence and unbounded friendship, she dwelt much more on the satisfaction this latter thousand pound created in her heart, than on the forty-seven which belonged to the Atkinson family. To the very few who are capable of feeling disinterested friendship this will be believed, for where is that affliction which yields not to the soothing participation of friendship? Pain, disappointment, unmerited calumny, and a thousand other evils, which all the riches in the world cannot soften or meliorate, vanish,

vanish, as a true sincere friend approaches ;

" Friendship ! thou best support of wretched

" man,

" That gives us, when our life grows pain-

" ful to us,

" A new existence in a second being."

But this inestimable treasure is as scarce as valuable. Exquisitely amiable as George and Louisa were, the tide of approbation and warm profession of inviolable attachment which awaited them in the hours of prosperity, ebbed as Mr. Montague withdrew his favour. Incapable of such interested friendship himself, he despised these summer birds too heartily to reproach them. Abercrombie, Lady Haleborough, the worthy Mrs. Duncombe, and humble Mary, their attached domestic, were absolutely the only creatures who interested themselves

selves in the fate of this suffering pair ; I might indeed have added the Marchioness of Pearcefield, but when I speak of *exquisite friendship*, I distinguish her from Lady Haleborough. Lucy exerted herself more from principle than innate affection ; I believe the exertion to be more meritorious, because less interested, for the efforts of perfect refined friendship, are certainly selfish. I cannot be happy while you are otherwise,—I therefore purchase my own peace by promoting yours. I give you half of *my* possessions, because less cannot purchase *your* peace, which constitutes *my* happiness ; I therefore act from a selfish principle. All but the Marchioness were thus *selfish* ; and Sir George Berkland lately discovered himself to belong to this class by his liberal present, which, however, was returned with
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the most grateful acknowledgment the hearts of the obliged could express, and an account of the fortunate change in their affairs, and promising to give him the particulars, which would constitute an excellent modern Novel, when he and Lady Abercrombie became their guests in whatever county they pitched upon to reside. They lost no time in conveying the agreeable tidings to the Haleboroughs and Pearcefields; the former noble pair were most urgent with them to purchase an estate contiguous to their own, in Suffex, which was to be sold; and Lord Haleborough, who understood a great deal of agriculture, declared it to be capable of great improvement. This wish and opinion of the Earl's were sufficient to bias George and his wife, and they immediately became the proprietors of it. Their friends

friends returned to England, and became so much attached to their ancient family seat, now they had such alluring neighbours, that all the unfortunate attachments Lord Haleborough had formerly entered into, were broke and renounced. Two sweet little girls and one boy improved and enlarged their domestic felicity. Louisa is just recovered from the indisposition another little stranger has occasioned, and is now happy in having Sir George Berkland and his amiable bride, her guests. Mrs. Duncombe has quitted her business of mantua-making, and is head nurse to the children, with a salary of thirty pound a year for life; and Mary is shortly to be married to her son, who is set up in the grocery business by his old uncle, who lived porter with Lord Haleborough. Mr. and Mrs. Montague

gue have known too much misfortune themselves to be neglectful of the prosperity and happiness of *those dependant upon them*. My good reader, I am just returned from this happy and deserving group, from whose example I have learnt—that every affliction is supportable while the conscience is free from reproach—that the greatest present *evil* may lead to the greatest future *good*, *even in this world*;—and that a kind and generous action to the forlorn and destitute child of *even* an inveterate enemy, may be attended with immediate blessings to us and our children.

“ Reader, go ! and do thou likewise.”

F I N I S.